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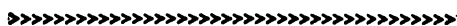




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## CONTENTS

### POEMS [published in 1817]

|                                                                                    | PAGE |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Dedication. To Leigh Hunt, Esq. . . . .                                            | x    |
| "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill" . . . . .                                     | 1    |
| Specimen of an Induction to a Poem . . . . .                                       | 6    |
| Calidore. A Fragment . . . . .                                                     | 8    |
| To Some Ladies . . . . .                                                           | 11   |
| On receiving a curious Shell, and a Copy of Verses, from the same Ladies . . . . . | 12   |
| To * * * * [Georgiana Augusta Wylie, afterwards Mrs. George Keats] . . . . .       | 14   |
| To Hope . . . . .                                                                  | 15   |
| Imitation of Spenser . . . . .                                                     | 17   |
| "Woman! when I behold thee flippant, vain" . . . . .                               | 18   |

### Epistles

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| To George Felton Mathew . . . . .  | 19 |
| To my Brother George . . . . .     | 21 |
| To Charles Cowden Clarke . . . . . | 24 |

### Sonnets

|                                                                   |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| I. To my Brother George . . . . .                                 | 28 |
| II. To * * * * * ["Had I a man's fair form"] . . . . .            | 28 |
| III. Written on the day that Mr. Leigh Hunt left Prison . . . . . | 28 |
| IV. "How many bards gild the lapses of time!" . . . . .           | 29 |
| V. To a Friend who sent me some Roses . . . . .                   | 29 |
| VI. To G. A. W. [Georgiana Augusta Wylie] . . . . .               | 30 |
| VII. "O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell" . . . . .            | 30 |
| VIII. To my Brothers . . . . .                                    | 30 |
| IX. "Keen, fitful gusts are whisp'ring here and there" . . . . .  | 31 |
| X. "To one who has been long in city pent" . . . . .              | 31 |
| XI. On first looking into Chapman's Homer . . . . .               | 32 |
| XII. On leaving some Friends at an early Hour . . . . .           | 32 |
| XIII. Addressed to Haydon . . . . .                               | 32 |
| XIV. Addressed to the same . . . . .                              | 33 |
| XV. On the Grasshopper and Cricket . . . . .                      | 33 |
| XVI. To Kosciusko . . . . .                                       | 34 |
| XVII. "Happy is England!" . . . . .                               | 34 |
| Sleep and Poetry . . . . .                                        | 35 |

### ENDYMION: A POETIC ROMANCE

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Preface by Keats . . . . . | 46  |
| Book I . . . . .           | 47  |
| Book II . . . . .          | 69  |
| Book III . . . . .         | 91  |
| Book IV . . . . .          | 114 |

**LAMIA, ISABELLA, &c. [published in 1820]**

PAGE

|                                                                  |            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Advertisement . . . . .                                          | 140        |
| Lamia. Part I . . . . .                                          | 141        |
| Lamia. Part II . . . . .                                         | 150        |
| Isabella; or, the Pot of Basil. A Story from Boccaccio . . . . . | 157        |
| The Eve of St. Agnes✓ . . . . .                                  | 172        |
| Ode to a Nightingale✓ . . . . .                                  | <u>183</u> |
| Ode on a Grecian Urn✓ . . . . .                                  | <u>185</u> |
| Ode to Psyche . . . . .                                          | <u>186</u> |
| Fancy . . . . .                                                  | 188        |
| Ode ["Bards of Passion and of Mirth"] . . . . .                  | 190        |
| Lines on the Mermaid Tavern . . . . .                            | 191        |
| Robin Hood. To a Friend . . . . .                                | 192        |
| To Autumn . . . . .                                              | 193        |
| Ode on Melancholy . . . . .                                      | <u>194</u> |
| Iperion. Book I . . . . .                                        | 196        |
| Iperion. Book II . . . . .                                       | 204        |
| Iperion. Book III . . . . .                                      | 212        |

**POSTHUMOUS AND FUGITIVE POEMS**

|                                                                   |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| On Death . . . . .                                                | 219        |
| Women, Wine, and Snuff . . . . .                                  | 219        |
| Fill for me a brimming bowl . . . . .                             | 219        |
| Sonnet on Peace . . . . .                                         | 220        |
| Sonnet to Byron . . . . .                                         | 220        |
| Sonnet to Chatterton . . . . .                                    | 221        |
| Sonnet to Spenser . . . . .                                       | 221        |
| Ode to Apollo . . . . .                                           | <u>221</u> |
| Sonnet to a Young Lady who sent me a Laurel Crown . . . . .       | <u>223</u> |
| On receiving a Laurel Crown from Leigh Hunt . . . . .             | 223        |
| To the Ladies who saw me Crown'd . . . . .                        | 223        |
| Hymn to Apollo . . . . .                                          | 224        |
| Sonnet ["As from the darkening gloom"] . . . . .                  | 225        |
| Stanzas to Miss Wylie . . . . .                                   | 225        |
| Sonnet ["Oh! how I love, on a fair summer's eve"] . . . . .       | 225        |
| Sonnet ["Before he went to feed with owls and bats"] . . . . .    | 226        |
| Sonnet written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition . . . . .        | 226        |
| Sonnet ["After dark vapours have oppress'd our plains"] . . . . . | 227        |
| Sonnet written at the end of "The Floure and the Lefe" . . . . .  | 227        |
| Sonnet to Haydon, with the following . . . . .                    | 227        |
| Sonnet on seeing the Elgin Marbles . . . . .                      | 228        |
| Sonnet on a Picture of Leander . . . . .                          | 228        |
| To—— ["Think not of it, sweet one, so;—"] . . . . .               | 229        |
| Lines ["Unfelt, unheard, unseen"] . . . . .                       | 229        |
| Sonnet on the Sea . . . . .                                       | 230        |
| Sonnet on Leigh Hunt's Poem "The Story of Rimini" . . . . .       | 230        |
| On Oxford: a Parody . . . . .                                     | 231        |
| The Poet: a Fragment . . . . .                                    | 231        |
| Modern Love . . . . .                                             | 232        |
| Fragments of The Castle Builder . . . . .                         | 232        |
| A Song of Opposites ["Welcome joy, and welcome sorrow"] . . . . . | 234        |

POSTHUMOUS AND FUGITIVE POEMS

|                                                                                              | PAGE |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Sonnet to a Cat . . . . .                                                                    | 235  |
| Lines on seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair . . . . .                                            | 235  |
| Sonnet on sitting down to read King Lear once again . . . . .                                | 236  |
| Sonnet ["When I have fears that I may cease to be"] . . . . .                                | 237  |
| Sharing Eve's Apple . . . . .                                                                | 237  |
| A Draught of Sunshine ["Hence Burgundy, Claret, and Port"] . . . . .                         | 238  |
| Sonnet to the Nile . . . . .                                                                 | 239  |
| Sonnet to a Lady seen for a few moments at Vauxhall . . . . .                                | 239  |
| Sonnet ["Blue! 'Tis the life of heaven"] . . . . .                                           | 240  |
| Sonnet to John Hamilton Reynolds . . . . .                                                   | 240  |
| What the Thrush said: Lines from a Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds . . . . .                | 240  |
| Sonnet—The Human Seasons . . . . .                                                           | 241  |
| <br>Extracts from an Opera                                                                   |      |
| "O! were I one of the Olympian twelve," . . . . .                                            | 241  |
| Daisy's Song . . . . .                                                                       | 242  |
| Folly's Song . . . . .                                                                       | 242  |
| "Oh, I am frighten'd with most hateful thoughts!" . . . . .                                  | 243  |
| Song ["The stranger lighted from his steed"] . . . . .                                       | 243  |
| "Asleep! O sleep a little while, white pearl!" . . . . .                                     | 243  |
| Faery Song ["Shed no tear—O shed no tear"] . . . . .                                         | 244  |
| Faery Song ["Ah! woe is me! poor silver-wing"] . . . . .                                     | 244  |
| Sonnet to Homer . . . . .                                                                    | 245  |
| Song ["Spirit here that reignest"] . . . . .                                                 | 245  |
| Teignmouth: "Some Doggerel," sent in a Letter to B. R. Haydon . . . . .                      | 246  |
| The Devon Maid: Stanzas sent in a Letter to B. R. Haydon . . . . .                           | 247  |
| Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds . . . . .                                                  | 248  |
| Dawlish Fair . . . . .                                                                       | 250  |
| Fragment of an Ode to Maia, written on May Day, 1818 . . . . .                               | 250  |
| Acrostic: Georgiana Augusta Keats . . . . .                                                  | 251  |
| Sonnet on Visiting the Tomb of Burns . . . . .                                               | 251  |
| Meg Merrilies . . . . .                                                                      | 252  |
| A Song about myself . . . . .                                                                | 253  |
| A Galloway Song . . . . .                                                                    | 254  |
| Sonnet to Ailsa Rock . . . . .                                                               | 255  |
| Sonnet written in the Cottage where Burns was born . . . . .                                 | 256  |
| Lines written in the Highlands after a Visit to Burns's Country . . . . .                    | 256  |
| The Gadfly . . . . .                                                                         | 257  |
| Sonnet on hearing the Bag-pipe and seeing "The Stranger" played at Inverary . . . . .        | 258  |
| Staffa . . . . .                                                                             | 259  |
| Sonnet written upon the Top of Ben Nevis . . . . .                                           | 260  |
| Ben Nevis: a Dialogue . . . . .                                                              | 260  |
| Translation from a Sonnet of Ronsard . . . . .                                               | 262  |
| A Prophecy: to George Keats in America . . . . .                                             | 263  |
| Stanzas ["In a drear-nighted December"] . . . . .                                            | 264  |
| Spenserian Stanza written at the Close of Canto II, Book V, of "The Faerie Queene" . . . . . | 265  |

## POSTHUMOUS AND FUGITIVE POEMS

|                                                                                 | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| The Eve of Saint Mark . . . . .                                                 | 265  |
| Ode to Fanny . . . . .                                                          | 268  |
| Sonnet to Sleep . . . . .                                                       | 270  |
| Song ["Hush, hush! tread softly"] . . . . .                                     | 270  |
| Song ["I had a dove"] . . . . .                                                 | 271  |
| Ode on Indolence . . . . .                                                      | 271  |
| Sonnet ["Why did I laugh to-night"] . . . . .                                   | 273  |
| Sonnet: a Dream, after reading Dante's Episode of Paulo and Francesca . . . . . | 273  |
| An Extempore from a Letter to George Keats and his Wife . . . . .               | 273  |
| Spenserian Stanzas on Charles Armitage Brown . . . . .                          | 276  |
| Two or Three: from a Letter to his Sister . . . . .                             | 276  |
| La Belle Dame sans Merci . . . . .                                              | 277  |
| Song of Four Faeries . . . . .                                                  | 279  |
| Two Sonnets on Fame . . . . .                                                   | 282  |
| Sonnet on the Sonnet . . . . .                                                  | 283  |
| Apollo and the Graces . . . . .                                                 | 283  |
| "You say you love" . . . . .                                                    | 284  |

## OTHO THE GREAT: A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Act I . . . . .   | 287 |
| Act II . . . . .  | 299 |
| Act III . . . . . | 307 |
| Act IV . . . . .  | 317 |
| Act V . . . . .   | 325 |

## KING STEPHEN; A FRAGMENT OF A TRAGEDY

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| Act I . . . . . | 339 |
|-----------------|-----|

## POEMS WRITTEN LATE IN 1819

|                                                                                 |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| A Party of Lovers . . . . .                                                     | 347 |
| Sonnet ["The day is gone"] . . . . .                                            | 347 |
| Lines to Fanny . . . . .                                                        | 348 |
| Sonnet to Fanny . . . . .                                                       | 349 |
| The Fall of Hyperion: a Dream . . . . .                                         | 353 |
| The Cap and Bells, or The Jealousies . . . . .                                  | 365 |
| Lines supposed to have been addressed to Fanny Brawne . . . . .                 | 389 |
| Sonnet written on a blank page in Shakespeare's Poems ["Bright star"] . . . . . | 389 |

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| INDEX OF TITLES . . . . . | 391 |
|---------------------------|-----|

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| INDEX OF FIRST LINES . . . . . | 395 |
|--------------------------------|-----|



**POEMS**  
**PUBLISHED IN 1817**

## DEDICATION

TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

GLORY and loveliness have pass'd away;  
For if we wander out in early morn,  
No wreathed incense do we see upborne  
Into the east, to meet the smiling day:  
No crowd of nymphs soft voic'd and young, and gay,      5  
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,  
Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn  
The shrine of Flora in her early May.  
But there are left delights as high as these,  
And I shall ever bless my destiny,  
That in a time, when under pleasant trees  
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,  
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please  
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.

## POEMS

"Places of nestling green for Poets made."  
*Story of Rimini.*

I stood tip-toe upon a little hill,  
The air was cooling, and so very still,  
That the sweet buds which with a modest pride  
Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,  
Their scanty leav'd, and finely tapering stems,  
Had not yet lost those starry diadems  
Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.  
The clouds were pure and white as flocks new shorn,  
And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept  
On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept 10  
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,  
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves:  
For not the faintest motion could be seen  
Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.  
There was wide wand'ring for the greediest eye,  
To peer about upon variety;  
Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim,  
And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim;  
To picture out the quaint, and curious bending  
Of a fresh woodland alley, never ending; 20  
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,  
Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves.  
I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free  
As though the fanning wings of Mercury  
Had play'd upon my heels: I was light-hearted,  
And many pleasures to my vision started;  
So I straightway began to pluck a posey  
Of luxuries bright, milky, soft and rosy.

A bush of May flowers with the bees about them;  
Ah, sure no tasteful nook would be without them; 30  
And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,  
And let long grass grow round the roots to keep them  
Moist, cool and green; and shade the violets,  
That they may bind the moss in leafy nets.  
A filbert hedge with wild briar overtined,  
And clumps of woodbine taking the soft wind

Upon their summer thrones; there too should be  
 The frequent chequer of a youngling tree,  
 That with a score of light green brethren shoots  
 From the quaint mossiness of aged roots: 40  
 Round which is heard a spring-head of clear waters  
 Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters  
 The spreading blue-bells: it may haply mourn  
 That such fair clusters should be rudely torn  
 From their fresh beds, and scattered thoughtlessly  
 By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,  
 Ye ardent marigolds!  
 Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,  
 For great Apollo bids 50  
 That in these days your praises should be sung  
 On many harps, which he has lately strung;  
 And when again your dewiness he kisses,  
 Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses:  
 So haply when I rove in some far vale,  
 His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet peas, on tip-toe for a flight:  
 With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,  
 And taper fingers catching at all things,  
 To bind them all about with tiny rings. 60

Linger awhile upon some bending planks  
 That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,  
 And watch intently Nature's gentle doings:  
 They will be found softer than ring-dove's cooings.  
 How silent comes the water round that bend;  
 Not the minutest whisper does it send  
 To the o'erhanging willows: blades of grass  
 Slowly across the chequer'd shadows pass.

Why, you might read two sonnets, ere they reach 70  
 To where the hurrying freshnesses aye preach  
 A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds;  
 Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,  
 Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,  
 To taste the luxury of sunny beams  
 Temper'd with coolness. How they ever wrestle  
 With their own sweet delight, and ever nestle  
 Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand.  
 If you but scantily hold out the hand,  
 That very instant not one will remain;

But turn your eye, and they are there again. 80  
 The ripples seem right glad to reach those cresses,  
 And cool themselves among the em'rald tresses;  
 The while they cool themselves, they freshness give,  
 And moisture, that the bowery green may live:  
 So keeping up an interchange of favours,  
 Like good men in the truth of their behaviours.  
 Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop  
 From low hung branches; little space they stop;  
 But sip, and twitter, and their feathers sleek;  
 Then off at once, as in a wanton freak: 90  
 Or perhaps, to show their black, and golden wings,  
 Pausing upon their yellow flutterings.  
 Were I in such a place, I sure should pray  
 That naught less sweet, might call my thoughts away,  
 Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown  
 Fanning away the dandelion's down;  
 Than the light music of her nimble toes  
 Patting against the sorrel as she goes.  
 How she would start, and blush, thus to be caught  
 Playing in all her innocence of thought. 100  
 O let me lead her gently o'er the brook,  
 Watch her half-smiling lips, and downward look;  
 O let me for one moment touch her wrist;  
 Let me one moment to her breathing list;  
 And as she leaves me may she often turn  
 Her fair eyes looking through her locks auburne.  
 What next? A tuft of evening primroses,  
 O'er which the mind may hover till it dozes;  
 O'er which it well might take a pleasant sleep,  
 But that 'tis ever startled by the leap 110  
 Of buds into ripe flowers; or by the flitting  
 Of diverse moths, that aye their rest are quitting;  
 Or by the moon lifting her silver rim  
 Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim  
 Coming into the blue with all her light.  
 O Maker of sweet poets, dear delight  
 Of this fair world, and all its gentle livers;  
 Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,  
 Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,  
 Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams, 120  
 Lover of loneliness, and wandering,  
 Of upcast eye, and tender pondering!  
 Thee must I praise above all other glories  
 That smile us on to tell delightful stories.  
 For what has made the sage or poet write  
 But the fair paradise of Nature's light?

In the calm grandeur of a sober line,  
 We see the waving of the mountain pine;  
 And when a tale is beautifully staid,  
 We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade: 131  
 When it is moving on luxurious wings,  
 The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings:  
 Fair dewy roses brush against our faces,  
 And flowering laurels spring from diamond vases;  
 O'er head we see the jasmine and sweet briar,  
 And bloomy grapes laughing from green attire;  
 While at our feet, the voice of crystal bubbles  
 Charms us at once away from all our troubles:  
 So that we feel uplifted from the world,  
 Walking upon the white clouds wreath'd and curl'd.  
 So felt he, who first told, how Psyche went 141  
 On the smooth wind to realms of wonderment;  
 What Psyche felt, and Love, when their full lips  
 First touch'd; what amorous, and fondling nips  
 They gave each other's cheeks; with all their sighs,  
 And how they kist each other's tremulous eyes:  
 The silver lamp,—the ravishment,—the wonder—  
 The darkness,—loneliness,—the fearful thunder;  
 Their woes gone by, and both to heaven upflown, 150  
 To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne.  
 So did he feel, who pull'd the boughs aside,  
 That we might look into a forest wide,  
 To catch a glimpse of Fauns, and Dryades  
 Coming with softest rustle through the trees;  
 And garlands woven of flowers wild, and sweet,  
 Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet:  
 Telling us how fair, trembling Syrinx fled  
 Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.  
 Poor nymph,—poor Pan,—how he did weep to find,  
 Naught but a lovely sighing of the wind 160  
 Along the reedy stream; a half-heard strain,  
 Full of sweet desolation—balmy pain.

What first inspired a bard of old to sing  
 Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring?  
 In some delicious ramble, he had found  
 A little space, with boughs all woven round;  
 And in the midst of all, a clearer pool  
 Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool,  
 The blue sky here, and there, serenely peeping  
 Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping. 170  
 And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,  
 A meek and forlorn flower, with naught of pride,

Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,  
 To woo its own sad image into nearness:  
 Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move;  
 But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.  
 So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,  
 Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot;  
 Nor was it long ere he had told the tale  
 Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale.

180

Where had he been, from whose warm head out-flew  
 That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,  
 That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,  
 Coming ever to bless  
 The wanderer by moonlight? to him bringing  
 Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly singing  
 From out the middle air, from flowery nests,  
 And from the pillowy silkiness that rests  
 Full in the speculation of the stars.  
 Ah! surely he had burst our mortal bars;  
 Into some wond'rous region he had gone,  
 To search for thee, divine Endymion!

190

He was a Poet, sure a lover too,  
 Who stood on Latmus' top, what time there blew  
 Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below;  
 And brought in faintness solemn, sweet, and slow  
 A hymn from Dian's temple; while upswelling,  
 The incense went to her own starry dwelling.  
 But though her face was clear as infant's eyes,  
 Though she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice,  
 The Poet wept at her so piteous fate,  
 Wept that such beauty should be desolate:  
 So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,  
 And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion.

200

Queen of the wide air; thou most lovely queen  
 Of all the brightness that mine eyes have seen!  
 As thou exceedest all things in thy shine,  
 So every tale, does this sweet tale of thine.  
 O for three words of honey, that I might  
 Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night!

211

Where distant ships do seem to show their keels,  
 Phoebus awhile delay'd his mighty wheels,  
 And turn'd to smile upon thy bashful eyes,  
 Ere he his unseen pomp would solemnize.  
 The evening weather was so bright, and clear,

That men of health were of unusual cheer;  
 Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's call,  
 Or young Apollo on the pedestal:  
 And lovely women were as fair and warm,  
 As Venus looking sideways in alarm. 220  
 The breezes were ethereal, and pure,  
 And crept through half-closed lattices to cure  
 The languid sick; it cool'd their fever'd sleep,  
 And soothed them into slumbers full and deep.  
 Soon they awoke clear eyed: nor burnt with thirsting,  
 Nor with hot fingers, nor with temples bursting:  
 And springing up, they met the wond'ring sight  
 Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with delight;  
 Who feel their arms, and breasts, and kiss and stare,  
 And on their placid foreheads part the hair. 230  
 'Young men, and maidens at each other gaz'd  
 With hands held back, and motionless, amaz'd  
 To see the brightness in each other's eyes;  
 And so they stood, fill'd with a sweet surprise,  
 Until their tongues were loos'd in poesy.  
 Therefore no lover did of anguish die:  
 But the soft numbers, in that moment spoken,  
 Made silken ties, that never may be broken.  
 Cynthia! I cannot tell the greater blisses,  
 That follow'd thine, and thy dear shepherd's kisses: 240  
 Was there a poet born?—but now no more,  
 My wand'ring spirit must no further soar.—

### SPECIMEN OF AN INDUCTION TO A POEM

Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;  
 For large white plumes are dancing in mine eye.  
 Not like the formal crest of latter days:  
 But bending in a thousand graceful ways;  
 So graceful, that it seems no mortal hand,  
 Or e'en the touch of Archimago's wand,  
 Could charm them into such an attitude.  
 We must think rather, that in playful mood,  
 Some mountain breeze had turn'd its chief delight,  
 To show this wonder of its gentle might. 10  
 Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;  
 For while I muse, the lance points slantingly  
 Athwart the morning air: some lady sweet,  
 Who cannot feel for cold her tender feet,  
 From the worn top of some old battlement  
 Hails it with tears, her stout defender sent:



And from her own pure self no joy dissembling,  
 Wraps round her ample robe with happy trembling.  
 Sometimes, when the good Knight his rest would take,  
 It is reflected, clearly, in a lake, 20  
 With the young ashen boughs, 'gainst which it rests,  
 And th' half seen mossiness of linnets' nests.  
 Ah! shall I ever tell its cruelty;  
 When the fire flashes from a warrior's eye,  
 And his tremendous hand is grasping it,  
 And his dark brow for very wrath is knit?  
 Or when his spirit, with more calm intent,  
 Leaps to the honors of a tournament,  
 And makes the gazers round about the ring  
 Stare at the grandeur of the ballancing? 30  
 No, no! this is far off:—then how shall I  
 Revive the dying tones of minstrelsy,  
 Which linger yet about long gothic arches,  
 In dark green ivy, and among wild larches?  
 How sing the splendour of the revelries,  
 When butts of wine are drunk off to the lees?  
 And that bright lance, against the fretted wall,  
 Beneath the shade of stately banneral,  
 Is slung with shining cuirass, sword, and shield?  
 Where ye may see a spur in bloody field. 40  
 Light-footed damsels move with gentle paces  
 Round the wide hall, and show their happy faces;  
 Or stand in courtly talk by fives and sevens:  
 Like those fair stars that twinkle in the heavens.  
 Yet must I tell a tale of chivalry:  
 Or wherefore comes that steed so proudly by?  
 Wherefore more proudly does the gentle knight,  
 Rein in the swelling of his ample might?

Spenser! thy brows are arched, open, kind,  
 And come like a clear sun-rise to my mind; 50  
 And always does my heart with pleasure dance,  
 When I think on thy noble countenance:  
 Where never yet was aught more earthly seen  
 Than the pure freshness of thy laurels green.  
 Therefore, great bard, I not so fearfully  
 Call on thy gentle spirit to hover nigh  
 My daring steps: or if thy tender care,  
 Thus startled unaware,  
 Be jealous that the foot of other wight  
 Should madly follow that bright path of light 60  
 Trac'd by thy lov'd Libertas; he will speak,  
 And tell thee that my prayer is very meek;

That I will follow with due reverence,  
 And start with awe at mine own strange pretence.  
 Him thou wilt hear; so I will rest in hope  
 To see wide plains, fair trees and lawny slope:  
 The morn, the eve, the light, the shade, the flowers;  
 Clear streams, smooth lakes, and overlooking towers.

## CALIDORE

### A FRAGMENT

YOUNG Calidore is paddling o'er the lake;  
 His healthful spirit eager and awake  
 To feel the beauty of a silent eve,  
 Which seem'd full loth this happy world to leave;  
 The light dwelt o'er the scene so lingeringly.  
 He bares his forehead to the cool blue sky,  
 And smiles at the far clearness all around,  
 Until his heart is well nigh over wound,  
 And turns for calmness to the pleasant green  
 Of easy slopes; and shadowy trees that lean 10  
 So elegantly o'er the waters' brim  
 And show their blossoms trim.  
 Scarce can his clear and nimble eye-sight follow  
 The freaks, and dartings of the black-wing'd swallow,  
 Delighting much, to see it half at rest,  
 Dip so refreshingly its wings, and breast  
 'Gainst the smooth surface, and to mark anon,  
 The widening circles into nothing gone.

And now the sharp keel of his little boat  
 Comes up with ripple, and with easy float, 20  
 And glides into a bed of water lillies:  
 Broad leav'd are they and their white canopies  
 Are upward turn'd to catch the heavens' dew.  
 Near to a little island's point they grew;  
 Whence Calidore might have the goodliest view  
 Of this sweet spot of earth. The bowery shore  
 Went off in gentle windings to the hoar  
 And light blue mountains: but no breathing man  
 With a warm heart, and eye prepared to scan  
 Nature's clear beauty, could pass lightly by 30  
 Objects that look'd out so invitingly  
 On either side. These, gentle Calidore  
 Greeted, as he had known them long before.  
 The sidelong view of swelling leafiness,

Which the glad setting sun, in gold doth dress;  
 Whence ever, and anon the jay outsprings,  
 And scales upon the beauty of its wings.  
 The lonely turret, shatter'd, and outworn,  
 Stands venerably proud; too proud to mourn  
 Its long lost grandeur: fir trees grow around, 40  
 Aye dropping their hard fruit upon the ground.  
 The little chapel with the cross above  
 Upholding wreaths of ivy; the white dove,  
 That on the window spreads his feathers light,  
 And seems from purple clouds to wing its flight.  
 Green tufted islands casting their soft shades  
 Across the lake; sequester'd leafy glades,  
 That through the dimness of their twilight show  
 Large dock leaves, spiral foxgloves, or the glow 50  
 Of the wild cat's eyes, or the silvery stems  
 Of delicate birch trees, or long grass which hems  
 A little brook. The youth had long been viewing  
 These pleasant things, and heaven was bedewing  
 The mountain flowers, when his glad senses caught  
 A trumpet's silver voice. Ah! it was fraught  
 With many joys for him: the warder's ken  
 Had found white coursers prancing in the glen:  
 Friends very dear to him he soon will see;  
 So pushes off his boat most eagerly,  
 And soon upon the lake he skims along, 60  
 Deaf to the nightingale's first under-song;  
 Nor minds he the white swans that dream so sweetly:  
 His spirit flies before him so completely.

And now he turns a jutting point of land,  
 Whence may be seen the castle gloomy, and grand:  
 Nor will a bee buzz round two swelling peaches,  
 Before the point of his light shallop reaches  
 Those marble steps that through the water dip:  
 Now over them he goes with hasty trip,  
 And scarcely stays to ope the folding doors: 70  
 Anon he leaps along the oaken floors  
 Of halls and corridors.  
 Delicious sounds! those little bright-eyed things  
 That float about the air on azure wings,  
 Had been less heartfelt by him than the clang  
 Of clattering hoofs; into the court he sprang,  
 Just as two noble steeds, and palfreys twain,  
 Were slanting out their necks with loosened rein;  
 While from beneath the threat'ning portcullis  
 They brought their happy burthens. What a kiss, 80

What gentle squeeze he gave each lady's hand!  
 How tremblingly their delicate ankles spann'd!  
 Into how sweet a trance his soul was gone,  
 While whisperings of affection  
 Made him delay to let their tender feet  
 Come to the earth; with an incline so sweet  
 From their low palfreys o'er his neck they bent:  
 And whether there were tears of languishment,  
 Or that the evening dew had pearl'd their tresses  
 He feels a moisture on his cheek, and blesses 90  
 With lips that tremble, and with glistening eye,  
 All the soft luxury  
 That nestled in his arms. A dimpled hand,  
 Fair as some wonder out of fairy land,  
 Hung from his shoulder like the drooping flowers  
 Of whitest Cassia, fresh from summer showers:  
 And this he fondled with his happy cheek  
 As if for joy he would no further seek;  
 When the kind voice of good Sir Clerimond  
 Came to his ear, like something from beyond 100  
 His present being; so he gently drew  
 His warm arms, thrilling now with pulses new,  
 From their sweet thrall, and forward meekly bending,  
 Thank'd heaven that his joy was never ending;  
 While 'gainst his forehead he devoutly press'd  
 A hand heaven made to succour the distress'd:  
 A hand that from the world's bleak promontory  
 Had lifted Calidore for deeds of Glory.

Amid the pages, and the torches' glare,  
 There stood a knight, patting the flowing hair 110  
 Of his proud horse's mane: he was withal  
 A man of elegance, and stature tall:  
 So that the waving of his plumes would be  
 High as the berries of a wild ash tree,  
 Or as the winged cap of Mercury.  
 His armour was so dexterously wrought  
 In shape, that sure no living man had thought  
 It hard, and heavy steel: but that indeed  
 It was some glorious form, some splendid weed,  
 In which a spirit new come from the skies 120  
 Might live, and show itself to human eyes.  
 'Tis the far-fam'd, the brave Sir Gondibert,  
 Said the good man to Calidore alert;  
 While the young warrior with a step of grace  
 Came up,—a courtly smile upon his face,  
 And mailed hand held out, ready to greet

The large-eyed wonder, and ambitious heat  
 Of the aspiring boy; who as he led  
 Those smiling ladies, often turn'd his head  
 To admire the visor arch'd so gracefully 130  
 Over a knightly brow; while they went by  
 The lamps that from the high roof'd hall were pendent,  
 And gave the steel a shining quite transcendent.

Soon in a pleasant chamber they are seated;  
 The sweet-lipp'd ladies have already greeted  
 All the green leaves that round the window clamber,  
 To show their purple stars, and bells of amber.  
 Sir Gondibert has doff'd his shining steel,  
 Gladdening in the free, and airy feel 140  
 Of a light mantle; and while Clerimond  
 Is looking round about him with a fond,  
 And placid eye, young Calidore is burning  
 To hear of knightly deeds, and gallant spurning  
 Of all unworthiness; and how the strong of arm  
 Kept off dismay, and terror, and alarm  
 From lovely women: while brimful of this,  
 He gave each damsel's hand so warm a kiss,  
 And had such manly ardour in his eye,  
 That each at other look'd half staringly;  
 And then their features started into smiles 150  
 Sweet as blue heavens o'er enchanted isles.

Softly the breezes from the forest came,  
 Softly they blew aside the taper's flame;  
 Clear was the song from Philomel's far bower;  
 Grateful the incense from the lime-tree flower;  
 Mysterious, wild, the far heard trumpet's tone;  
 Lovely the moon in ether, all alone:  
 Sweet too the converse of these happy mortals,  
 As that of busy spirits when the portals 160  
 Are closing in the west; or that soft humming  
 We hear around when Hesperus is coming.  
 Sweet be their sleep. \* \* \* \* \*

### TO SOME LADIES

WHAT though while the wonders of nature exploring,  
 I cannot your light, mazy footsteps attend;  
 Nor listen to accents, that almost adoring,  
 Bless Cynthia's face. the enthusiast's friend:

Yet over the steep, whence the mountain stream rushes,  
 With you, kindest friends, in idea I muse;  
 Mark the clear tumbling crystal, its passionate gushes,  
 In spray that the wild flower kindly bedews.

Why linger you so, the wild labyrinth strolling?  
 Why breathless, unable your bliss to declare?  
 Ah! you list to the nightingale's tender condoling,  
 Responsive to sylphs, in the moon-beamy air.

10

'Tis morn, and the flowers with dew are yet drooping,  
 I see you are treading the verge of the sea:  
 And now! ah, I see it—you just now are stooping  
 To pick up the keep-sake intended for me.

If a cherub, on pinions of silver descending,  
 Had brought me a gem from the fret-work of heaven;  
 And smiles, with his star-cheering voice sweetly blending,  
 The blessings of Tighe had melodiously given;

20

It had not created a warmer emotion  
 Than the present, fair nymphs, I was blest with from you,  
 Than the shell, from the bright golden sands of the ocean  
 Which the emerald waves at your feet gladly threw.

For, indeed, 'tis a sweet and peculiar pleasure  
 (And blissful is he who such happiness finds),  
 To possess but a span of the hour of leisure,  
 In elegant, pure, and aerial minds.

## ON RECEIVING A CURIOUS SHELL, AND A COPY OF VERSES,

FROM THE SAME LADIES

Hast thou from the caves of Golconda, a gem  
 Pure as the ice-drop that froze on the mountain?  
 Bright as the humming-bird's green diadem,  
 When it flutters in sun-beams that shine through a fountain?

Hast thou a goblet for dark sparkling wine?  
 That goblet right heavy, and massy, and gold?  
 And splendidly mark'd with the story divine  
 Of Armida the fair, and Rinaldo the bold?

Hast thou a steed with a mane richly flowing?

Hast thou a sword that thine enemy's smart is?

10

Hast thou a trumpet rich melodies blowing?

And wear'st thou the shield of the fam'd Britomartis?

What is it that hangs from thy shoulder, so brave,

Embroider'd with many a spring peering flower?

Is it a scarf that thy fair lady gave?

And hastest thou now to that fair lady's bower?

Ah! courteous Sir Knight, with large joy thou art crown'd;

Full many the glories that brighten thy youth!

I will tell thee my blisses, which richly abound

In magical powers to bless, and to sooth.

20

On this scroll thou seest written in characters fair

A sun-beamy tale of a wreath, and a chain;

And, warrior, it nurtures the property rare

Of charming my mind from the trammels of pain.

This canopy mark: 'tis the work of a fay;

Beneath its rich shade did King Oberon languish,

When lovely Titania was far, far away,

And cruelly left him to sorrow, and anguish.

There, oft would he bring from his soft sighing lute

Wild strains to which, spell-bound, the nightingales listen'd; 30

The wondering spirits of heaven were mute,

And tears 'mong the dewdrops of morning oft glisten'd.

In this little dome, all those melodies strange,

Soft, plaintive, and melting, for ever will sigh;

Nor e'er will the notes from their tenderness change;

Nor e'er will the music of Oberon die.

So, when I am in a voluptuous vein,

I pillow my head on the sweets of the rose,

And list to the tale of the wreath, and the chain,

Till its echoes depart; then I sink to repose.

40

Adieu, valiant Eric! with joy thou art crown'd;

Full many the glories that brighten thy youth,

I too have my blisses, which richly abound

In magical powers, to bless and to sooth.

TO \* \* \* \*

[GEORGIANA AUGUSTA WYLIE, AFTERWARDS  
MRS. GEORGE KEATS]

HADST thou liv'd in days of old,  
 O what wonders had been told  
 Of thy lively countenance,  
 And thy humid eyes that dance  
 In the midst of their own brightness;  
*In* the very fane of lightness.  
 Over which thine eyebrows, leaning,  
 Picture out each lovely meaning:  
 In a dainty bend they lie,  
 Like to streaks across the sky, 10  
 Or the feathers from a crow,  
 Fallen on a bed of snow.  
 Of thy dark hair that extends  
 Into many graceful bends:  
 As the leaves of Hellebore  
 Turn to whence they sprung before  
 And behind each ample curl  
 Peeps the richness of a pearl.  
 Downward too flows many a tress 20  
 With a glossy waviness;  
 Full, and round like globes that rise  
 From the censer to the skies  
 Through sunny air. Add too, the sweetness  
 Of thy honey'd voice; the neatness  
 Of thine ankle lightly turn'd:  
 With those beauties, scarce discern'd,  
 Kept with such sweet privacy,  
 That they seldom meet the eye  
 Of the little loves that fly 30  
 Round about with eager pry.  
 Saving when, with freshening lave,  
 Thou dipp'st them in the taintless wave;  
 Like twin water lillies, born  
 In the coolness of the morn.  
 O, if thou hadst breathed then,  
 Now the Muses had been ten.  
 Couldst thou wish for lineage higher  
 Than twin sister of Thalia?  
 At least for ever, evermore,  
 Will I call the Graces four. 40



Hadst thou liv'd when chivalry  
 Lifted up her lance on high,  
 Tell me what thou wouldst have been?  
 Ah! I see the silver sheen  
 Of thy broider'd, floating vest  
 Cov'ring half thine ivory breast;  
 Which, O heavens! I should see,  
 But that cruel destiny  
 Has placed a golden cuirass there;  
 Keeping secret what is fair.  
 Like sunbeams in a cloudlet nested  
 Thy locks in knightly casque are rested:  
 O'er which bend four milky plumes  
 Like the gentle lilly's blooms  
 Springing from a costly vase.  
 See with what a stately pace  
 Comes thine alabaster steed;  
 Servant of heroic deed!  
 O'er his loins, his trappings glow  
 Like the northern lights on snow.  
 Mount his back! thy sword unsheath!  
 Sign of the enchanter's death;  
 Bane of every wicked spell;  
 Silencer of dragon's yell.  
 Alas! thou this wilt never do:  
 Thou art an enchantress too,  
 And wilt surely never spill  
 Blood of those whose eyes can kill.

50

60

## TO HOPE

WHEN by my solitary hearth I sit,  
 And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom;  
 When no fair dreams before my 'mind's eye' flit,  
 And the bare heath of life presents no bloom;  
 Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me shed,  
 And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

Whene'er I wander, at the fall of night,  
 Where woven boughs shut out the moon's bright ray,  
 Should sad Despondency my musings fright,  
 And frown, to drive fair Cheerfulness away,  
 Peep with the moon-beams through the leafy roof  
 And keep that fiend Despondence far aloof.

10

Should Disappointment, parent of Despair,  
 Strive for her son to seize my careless heart;  
 When, like a cloud, he sits upon the air,  
   Preparing on his spell-bound prey to dart:  
     Chace him away, sweet Hope, with visage bright,  
 And fright him as the morning frightens night!

Whene'er the fate of those I hold most dear  
   Tells to my fearful breast a tale of sorrow, 20  
 O bright-eyed Hope, my morbid fancy cheer;  
   Let me awhile thy sweetest comforts borrow:  
     Thy heaven-born radiance around me shed,  
   And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head!

Should e'er unhappy love my bosom pain,  
   From cruel parents, or relentless fair;  
 O let me think it is not quite in vain  
   To sigh out sonnets to the midnight air!  
     Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me shed,  
   And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head! 30

In the long vista of the years to roll,  
   Let me not see our country's honour fade:  
 O let me see our land retain her soul,  
   Her pride, her freedom; and not freedom's shade.  
     From thy bright eyes unusual brightness shed—  
   Beneath thy pinions canopy my head!

Let me not see the patriot's high bequest,  
   Great Liberty! how great in plain attire!  
 With the base purple of a court oppress'd,  
   Bowing her head, and ready to expire: 40  
     But let me see thee stoop from heaven on wings  
   That fill the skies with silver glitterings!

And as, in sparkling majesty, a star  
   Gilds the bright summit of some gloomy cloud;  
 Brightening the half veil'd face of heaven afar:  
   So, when dark thoughts my boding spirit shroud,  
     Sweet Hope, celestial influence round me shed,  
   Waving thy silver pinions o'er my head.

*February, 1815.*

## IMITATION OF SPENSER

\* \* \* \* \*

Now Morning from her orient chamber came,  
 And her first footsteps touch'd a verdant hill;  
 Crowning its lawny crest with amber flame,  
 Silv'ring the untainted gushes of its rill;  
 Which, pure from mossy beds, did down distill,  
 And after parting beds of simple flowers,  
 By many streams a little lake did fill,  
 Which round its marge reflected woven bowers,  
 And, in its middle space, a sky that never lowers.

There the king-fisher saw his plumage bright 10  
 Vieing with fish of brilliant dye below;  
 Whose silken fins, and golden scales' light  
 Cast upward, through the waves, a ruby glow:  
 There saw the swan his neck of arched snow,  
 And oar'd himself along with majesty;  
 Sparkled his jetty eyes; his feet did show  
 Beneath the waves like Afric's ebony,  
 And on his back a fay reclined voluptuously.

Ah! could I tell the wonders of an isle  
 That in that fairest lake had placed been, 20  
 I could e'en Dido of her grief beguile;  
 Or rob from aged Lear his bitter teen:  
 For sure so fair a place was never seen,  
 Of all that ever charm'd romantic eye:  
 It seem'd an emerald in the silver sheen  
 Of the bright waters; or as when on high,  
 Through clouds of fleecy white, laughs the cœrulean sky.

And all around it dipp'd luxuriously  
 Slopings of verdure through the glossy tide,  
 Which, as it were in gentle amity, 30  
 Rippled delighted up the flowery side;  
 As if to glean the ruddy tears, it tried,  
 Which fell profusely from the rose-tree stem!  
 Haply it was the workings of its pride,  
 In strife to throw upon the shore a gem  
 Outvieing all the buds in Flora's diadem.

\* \* \* \* \*

WOMAN! when I behold thee flippant, vain,  
 Inconstant, childish, proud, and full of fancies;  
 Without that modest softening that enhances  
 The downcast eye, repentant of the pain  
 That its mild light creates to heal again:  
 E'en then, elate, my spirit leaps, and prances,  
 E'en then my soul with exultation dances

For that to love, so long, I've dormant lain:  
 But when I see thee meek, and kind, and tender,  
 Heavens! how desperately do I adore  
 Thy winning graces;—to be thy defender  
 I hotly burn—to be a Calidore—  
 A very Red Cross Knight—a stout Leander—  
 Might I be loved by thee like these of yore.

10

Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair;  
 Soft dimpled hands, white neck, and creamy breast,  
 Are things on which the dazzled senses rest  
 Till the fond, fixed eyes, forget they stare.  
 From such fine pictures, heavens! I cannot dare  
 To turn my admiration, though unpossess'd  
 They be of what is worthy,—though not drest  
 In lovely modesty, and virtues rare.  
 Yet these I leave as thoughtless as a lark;  
 These lures I straight forget,—e'en ere I dine,  
 Or thrice my palate moisten: but when I mark  
 Such charms with mild intelligences shine,  
 My ear is open like a greedy shark,  
 To catch the tunings of a voice divine.

20

Ah! who can e'er forget so fair a being?  
 Who can forget her half retiring sweets?  
 God! she is like a milk-white lamb that bleats  
 For man's protection. Surely the All-seeing,  
 Who joys to see us with his gifts agreeing,  
 Will never give him pinions, who intreats  
 Such innocence to ruin,—who vilely cheats  
 A dove-like bosom. In truth there is no freeing  
 One's thoughts from such a beauty; when I hear  
 A lay that once I saw her hand awake,  
 Her form seems floating palpable, and near;  
 Had I e'er seen her from an arbour take  
 A dewy flower, oft would that hand appear,  
 And o'er my eyes the trembling moisture shake.

30

40

## EPISTLES

### TO GEORGE FELTON MATHEW

SWEET are the pleasures that to verse belong,  
And doubly sweet a brotherhood in song;  
Nor can remembrance, Mathew! bring to view  
A fate more pleasing, a delight more true  
Than that in which the brother Poets joy'd,  
Who with combined powers, their wit employ'd  
To raise a trophy to the drama's muses.  
The thought of this great partnership diffuses  
Over the genius loving heart, a feeling  
Of all that's high, and great, and good, and healing.

Too partial friend! fain would I follow thee 11  
Past each horizon of fine poesy;  
Fain would I echo back each pleasant note  
As o'er Sicilian seas, clear anthems float  
'Mong the light skimming gondolas far parted,  
Just when the sun his farewell beam has darted:  
But 'tis impossible; far different cares  
Beckon me sternly from soft 'Lydian airs,'  
And hold my faculties so long in thrall, 20  
That I am oft in doubt whether at all  
I shall again see Phœbus in the morning:  
Or flush'd Aurora in the roseate dawning!  
Or a white Naiad in a rippling stream;  
Or a rapt seraph in a moonlight beam;  
Or again witness what with thee I've seen,  
The dew by fairy feet swept from the green,  
After a night of some quaint jubilee  
Which every elf and fay had come to see:  
When bright processions took their airy march 30  
Beneath the curved moon's triumphal arch.  
But might I now each passing moment give  
To the coy muse, with me she would not live  
In this dark city, nor would condescend  
'Mid contradictions her delights to lend.  
Should e'er the fine-eyed maid to me be kind,  
Ah! surely it must be whene'er I find  
Some flowery spot, sequester'd, wild, romantic,  
That often must have seen a poet frantic;  
Where oaks, that erst the Druid knew, are growing,

And flowers, the glory of one day, are blowing; 40  
 Where the dark-leav'd laburnum's drooping clusters  
 Reflect athwart the stream their yellow lustres,  
 And intertwined the cassia's arms unite,  
 With its own drooping buds, but very white.  
 Where on one side are covert branches hung,  
 'Mong which the nightingales have always sung  
 In leafy quiet: where to pry, aloof,  
 Atween the pillars of the sylvan roof,  
 Would be to find where violet beds were nestling,  
 And where the bee with cowslip bells was wrestling. 51  
 There must be too a ruin dark, and gloomy,  
 To say 'joy not too much in all that's bloomy.'

Yet this is vain—O Mathew lend thy aid  
 To find a place where I may greet the maid—  
 Where we may soft humanity put on,  
 And sit, and rhyme and think on Chatterton;  
 And that warm-hearted Shakespeare sent to meet him  
 Four laurell'd spirits, heaven-ward to intreat him. 59  
 With reverence would we speak of all the sages  
 Who have left streaks of light athwart their ages:  
 And thou shouldst moralize on Milton's blindness,  
 And mourn the fearful dearth of human kindness  
 To those who strove with the bright golden wing  
 Of genius, to flap away each sting  
 Thrown by the pitiless world. We next could tell  
 Of those who in the cause of freedom fell;  
 Of our own Alfred, of Helvetian Tell;  
 Of him whose name to ev'ry heart's a solace,  
 High-minded and unbending William Wallace. 70  
 While to the rugged north our musing turns  
 We well might drop a tear for him, and Burns.  
 Felton! without incitements such as these,  
 How vain for me the niggard Muse to tease:  
 For thee, she will thy every dwelling grace,  
 And make 'a sun-shine in a shady place.'  
 For thou wast once a flowret blooming wild,  
 Close to the source, bright, pure, and undefil'd,  
 Whence gush the streams of song: in happy hour  
 Came chaste Diana from her shady bower,  
 Just as the sun was from the east uprising; 80  
 And, as for him some gift she was devising,  
 Beheld thee, pluck'd thee, cast thee in the stream  
 To meet her glorious brother's greeting beam.  
 I marvel much that thou hast never told  
 How, from a flower, into a fish of gold

Apollo chang'd thee; how thou next didst seem  
 A black-eyed swan upon the widening stream;  
 And when thou first didst in that mirror trace  
 The placid features of a human face:  
 That thou hast never told thy travels strange,  
 And all the wonders of the mazy range  
 O'er pebbly crystal, and o'er golden sands;  
 Kissing thy daily food from Naiad's pearly hands.

90

*November, 1815.*

### TO MY BROTHER GEORGE

FULL many a dreary hour have I past,  
 My brain bewilder'd, and my mind o'ercast  
 With heaviness; in seasons when I've thought  
 No spherey strains by me could e'er be caught  
 From the blue dome, though I to dimness gaze  
 On the far depth where sheeted lightning plays;  
 Or, on the wavy grass outstretch'd supinely,  
 Pry 'mong the stars, to strive to think divinely:  
 That I should never hear Apollo's song,  
 Though feathery clouds were floating all along  
 The purple west, and, two bright streaks between,  
 The golden lyre itself were dimly seen:  
 That the still murmur of the honey bee  
 Would never teach a rural song to me:  
 That the bright glance from beauty's eyelids slanting  
 Would never make a lay of mine enchanting,  
 Or warm my breast with ardour to unfold  
 Some tale of love and arms in time of old.

10

But there are times, when those that love the bay,  
 Fly from all sorrowing far, far away;  
 A sudden glow comes on them, naught they see  
 In water, earth, or air, but poesy.  
 It has been said, dear George, and true I hold it,  
 (For knightly Spenser to Libertas told it,)
 That when a Poet is in such a trance,  
 In air he sees white coursers paw, and prance,  
 Bestriden of gay knights, in gay apparel,  
 Who at each other tilt in playful quarrel,  
 And what we, ignorantly, sheet-lightning call,  
 Is the swift opening of their wide portal,  
 When the bright warder blows his trumpet clear,  
 Whose tones reach naught on earth but Poet's ear.

20

30

When these enchanted portals open wide,  
 And through the light the horsemen swiftly glide,  
 The Poet's eye can reach those golden halls,  
 And view the glory of their festivals:  
 Their ladies fair, that in the distance seem  
 Fit for the silv'ring of a seraph's dream;  
 Their rich brimm'd goblets, that incessant run  
 Like the bright spots that move about the sun; 40  
 And, when upheld, the wine from each bright jar  
 Pours with the lustre of a falling star.  
 Yet further off, are dimly seen their bowers,  
 Of which, no mortal eye can reach the flowers;  
 And 'tis right just, for well Apollo knows  
 'Twould make the Poet quarrel with the rose.  
 All that's reveal'd from that far seat of blisses,  
 Is, the clear fountains' interchanging kisses,  
 As gracefully descending, light and thin,  
 Like silver streaks across a dolphin's fin, 50  
 When he upswimmeth from the coral caves,  
 And sports with half his tail above the waves.

These wonders strange he sees, and many more,  
 Whose head is pregnant with poetic lore.  
 Should he upon an evening ramble fare  
 With forehead to the soothing breezes bare,  
 Would he naught see but the dark, silent blue  
 With all its diamonds trembling through and through?  
 Or the coy moon, when in the waviness  
 Of whitest clouds she does her beauty dress, 60  
 And staidly paces higher up, and higher,  
 Like a sweet nun in holy-day attire?  
 Ah, yes! much more would start into his sight—  
 The revelries, and mysteries of night:  
 And should I ever see them, I will tell you  
 Such tales as needs must with amazement spell you.

These are the living pleasures of the bard:  
 But richer far posterity's award.  
 What does he murmur with his latest breath, 69  
 While his proud eye looks through the film of death?  
 "What though I leave this dull, and earthly mould,  
 Yet shall my spirit lofty converse hold  
 With after times.—The patriot shall feel  
 My stern alarum, and unsheath his steel;  
 Or, in the senate thunder out my numbers  
 To startle princes from their easy slumbers.



The sage will mingle with each moral theme  
 My happy thoughts sententious; he will teem  
 With lofty periods when my verses fire him,  
 And then I'll stoop from heaven to inspire him. 80  
 Lays have I left of such a dear delight  
 That maids will sing them on their bridal night.  
 Gay villagers, upon a morn of May,  
 When they have tired their gentle limbs with play,  
 And form'd a snowy circle on the grass,  
 And plac'd in midst of all that lovely lass  
 Who chosen is their queen,—with her fine head  
 Crowned with flowers purple, white, and red:  
 For there the lilly, and the musk-rose, sighing,  
 Are emblems true of hapless lovers dying: 90  
 Between her breasts, that never yet felt trouble,  
 A bunch of violets full blown, and double,  
 Serenely sleep:—she from a casket takes  
 A little book,—and then a joy awakes  
 About each youthful heart,—with stifled cries,  
 And rubbing of white hands, and sparkling eyes:  
 For she's to read a tale of hopes, and fears;  
 One that I foster'd in my youthful years:  
 The pearls, that on each glist'ning circlet sleep,  
 Gush ever and anon with silent creep, 100  
 Lured by the innocent dimples. To sweet rest  
 Shall the dear babe, upon its mother's breast,  
 Be lull'd with songs of mine. Fair world, adieu!  
 Thy dales, and hills, are fading from my view:  
 Swiftly I mount, upon wide spreading pinions,  
 Far from the narrow bounds of thy dominions.  
 Full joy I feel, while thus I cleave the air,  
 That my soft verse will charm thy daughters fair,  
 And warm thy sons!" Ah, my dear friend and brother,  
 Could I, at once, my mad ambition smother, 110  
 For tasting joys like these, sure I should be  
 Happier, and dearer to society.  
 At times, 'tis true, I've felt relief from pain  
 When some bright thought has darted through my brain.  
 Through all that day I've felt a greater pleasure  
 Than if I'd brought to light a hidden treasure.  
 As to my sonnets, though none else should heed them,  
 I feel delighted, still, that you should read them.  
 Of late, too, I have had much calm enjoyment, 119  
 Stretch'd on the grass at my best lov'd employment  
 Of scribbling lines for you. These things I thought  
 While, in my face, the freshest breeze I caught.

E'en now I'm pillow'd on a bed of flowers  
 That crowns a lofty clift, which proudly towers  
 Above the ocean-waves. The stalks, and blades,  
 Chequer my tablet with their quivering shades.  
 On one side is a field of drooping oats,  
 Through which the poppies show their scarlet coats;  
 So pert and useless, that they bring to mind  
 The scarlet coats that pester human-kind. 130  
 And on the other side, outspread, is seen  
 Ocean's blue mantle streak'd with purple, and green.  
 Now 'tis I see a canvass'd ship, and now  
 Mark the bright silver curling round her prow.  
 I see the lark down-dropping to his nest,  
 And the broad winged sea-gull never at rest;  
 For when no more he spreads his feathers free,  
 His breast is dancing on the restless sea.  
 Now I direct my eyes into the west,  
 Which at this moment is in sun-beams drest: 140  
 Why westward turn? 'Twas but to say adieu!  
 'Twas but to kiss my hand, dear George, to you!  
 [MARGATE] *August*, 1816.

### TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE

OFT have you seen a swan superbly frowning,  
 And with proud breast his own white shadow crowning;  
 He slants his neck beneath the waters bright  
 So silently, it seems a beam of light  
 Come from the galaxy: anon he sports,—  
 With outspread wings the Naiad Zephyr courts,  
 Or ruffles all the surface of the lake  
 In striving from its crystal face to take  
 Some diamond water drops, and them to treasure 10  
 In milky nest, and sip them off at leisure.  
 But not a moment can he there insure them,  
 Nor to such downy rest can he allure them;  
 For down they rush as though they would be free,  
 And drop like hours into eternity.  
 Just like that bird am I in loss of time,  
 Whene'er I venture on the stream of rhyme;  
 With shatter'd boat, oar snapt, and canvass rent  
 I slowly sail, scarce knowing my intent;  
 Still scooping up the water with my fingers,  
 In which a trembling diamond never lingers. 20  
 By this, friend Charles, you may full plainly see  
 Why I have never penn'd a line to thee:

Because my thoughts were never free, and clear,  
 And little fit to please a classic ear;  
 Because my wine was of too poor a savour  
 For one whose palate gladdens in the flavour  
 Of sparkling Helicon:—small good it were  
 To take him to a desert rude, and bare,  
 Who had on Baiæ's shore reclin'd at ease,  
 While Tasso's page was floating in a breeze 30  
 That gave soft music from Armida's bowers,  
 Mingled with fragrance from her rarest flowers:  
 Small good to one who had by Mulla's stream  
 Fondled the maidens with the breasts of cream;  
 Who had beheld Belphœbe in a brook,  
 And lovely Una in a leafy nook,  
 And Archimago leaning o'er his book:  
 Who had of all that's sweet tasted, and seen,  
 From silv'ry ripple, up to beauty's queen;  
 From the sequester'd haunts of gay Titania, 40  
 To the blue dwelling of divine Urania:  
 One, who, of late, had ta'en sweet forest walks  
 With him who elegantly chats and talks—  
 The wrong'd Libertas,—who has told you stories  
 Of laurel chaplets, and Apollo's glories;  
 Of troops chivalrous prancing through a city,  
 And tearful ladies made for love, and pity:  
 With many else which I have never known.  
 Thus have I thought; and days on days have flown 50  
 Slowly, or rapidly—unwilling still  
 For you to try my dull, unlearned quill.  
 Nor should I now, but that I've known you long;  
 That you first taught me all the sweets of song:  
 The grand, the sweet, the terse, the free, the fine;  
 What swell'd with pathos, and what right divine:  
 Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,  
 And float along like birds o'er summer seas;  
 Miltonian storms. and more, Miltonian tenderness;  
 Michael in arms, and more, meek Eve's fair slenderness. 60  
 Who read for me the sonnet swelling loudly  
 Up to its climax and then dying proudly?  
 Who found for me the grandeur of the ode,  
 Growing, like Atlas, stronger from its load?  
 Who let me taste that more than cordial dram,  
 The sharp, the rapier-pointed epigram?  
 Show'd me that epic was of all the king,  
 Round, vast, and spanning all like Saturn's ring?  
 You too upheld the veil from Clio's beauty,  
 And pointed out the patriot's stern duty:

The might of Alfred, and the shaft of Tell; 70  
 The hand of Brutus, that so grandly fell  
 Upon a tyrant's head. Ah! had I never seen,  
 Or known your kindness, what might I have been?  
 What my enjoyments in my youthful years,  
 Bereft of all that now my life endears?  
 And can I e'er these benefits forget?  
 And can I e'er repay the friendly debt?  
 No, doubly no;—yet should these rhymings please,  
 I shall roll on the grass with two-fold ease:  
 For I have long time been my fancy feeding 80  
 With hopes that you would one day think the reading  
 Of my rough verses not an hour misspent;  
 Should it e'er be so, what a rich content!  
 Some weeks have pass'd since last I saw the spires  
 In lucent Thames reflected:—warm desires  
 To see the sun o'erpeep the eastern dimness,  
 And morning shadows streaking into slimness  
 Across the lawny fields, and pebbly water;  
 To mark the time as they grow broad, and shorter;  
 To feel the air that plays about the hills, 90  
 And sips its freshness from the little rills;  
 To see high, golden corn wave in the light  
 When Cynthia smiles upon a summer's night,  
 And peers among the cloudlets jet and white,  
 As though she were reclining in a bed  
 Of bean blossoms, in heaven freshly shed.  
 No sooner had I stepp'd into these pleasures  
 Than I began to think of rhymes and measures:  
 The air that floated by me seem'd to say  
 "Write! thou wilt never have a better day." 100  
 And so I did. When many lines I'd written,  
 Though with their grace I was not oversmitten,  
 Yet, as my hand was warm, I thought I'd better  
 Trust to my feelings, and write you a letter.  
 Such an attempt required an inspiration  
 Of a peculiar sort,—a consummation;—  
 Which, had I felt, these scribblings might have been  
 Verses from which the soul would never wean:  
 But many days have passed since last my heart  
 Was warm'd luxuriously by divine Mozart; 110  
 By Arne delighted, or by Handel madden'd;  
 Or by the song of Erin pierc'd and sadden'd:  
 What time you were before the music fitting,  
 And the rich notes to each sensation fitting.  
 Since I have walk'd with you through shady lanes  
 That freshly terminate in open plains,

And revel'd in a chat that ceased not  
When at night-fall among your books we got:  
No, nor when supper came, nor after that,—  
Nor when reluctantly I took my hat; 120  
No, nor till cordially you shook my hand  
Mid-way between our homes:—your accents bland  
Still sounded in my ears, when I no more  
Could hear your footsteps touch the grav'ly floor.  
Sometimes I lost them, and then found again;  
You chang'd the footpath for the grassy plain.  
In those still moments I have wish'd you joys  
That well you know to honour:—"Life's very toys  
"With him," said I, "will take a pleasant charm;  
"It cannot be that aught will work him harm." 130  
These thoughts now come o'er me with all their might:—  
Again I shake your hand,—friend Charles, good night.  
*September, 1816.*

## SONNETS

### I

#### TO MY BROTHER GEORGE

MANY the wonders I this day have seen:  
The sun, when first he kist away the tears  
That fill'd the eyes of morn;—the laurell'd peers  
Who from the feathery gold of evening lean;—  
The ocean with its vastness, its blue green,  
Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears,—  
Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears  
Must think on what will be, and what has been.  
E'en now, dear George, while this for you I write,  
Cynthia is from her silken curtains peeping 10  
So scanty, that it seems her bridal night,  
And she her half-discover'd revels keeping.  
But what, without the social thought of thee,  
Would be the wonders of the sky and sea?

### II

#### TO \* \* \* \* \*

HAD I a man's fair form, then might my sighs  
Be echoed swiftly through that ivory shell  
Thine ear, and find thy gentle heart; so well  
Would passion arm me for the enterprise:  
But ah! I am no knight whose foeman dies;  
No cuirass glistens on my bosom's swell;  
I am no happy shepherd of the dell  
Whose lips have trembled with a maiden's eyes.  
Yet must I dote upon thee,—call thee sweet,  
Sweeter by far than Hybla's honied roses 10  
When steep'd in dew rich to intoxication.  
Ah! I will taste that dew, for me 'tis meet,  
And when the moon her pallid face discloses,  
I'll gather some by spells, and incantation.

### III

#### WRITTEN ON THE DAY THAT MR. LEIGH HUNT LEFT PRISON

WHAT though, for showing truth to flatter'd state,  
Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,  
In his immortal spirit, been as free

As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.  
 Minion of grandeur! think you he did wait?  
     Think you he naught but prison walls did see,  
     Till, so unwilling, thou unturn'dst the key?  
 Ah, no! far happier, nobler was his fate!  
 In Spenser's halls he stray'd, and bowers fair,  
     Culling enchanted flowers; and he flew  
 With daring Milton through the fields of air:  
     To regions of his own his genius true  
 Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair  
     When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew?

10

## IV

How many bards gild the lapses of time!  
     A few of them have ever been the food  
     Of my delighted fancy,—I could brood  
 Over their beauties, earthly, or sublime:  
 And often, when I sit me down to rhyme,  
     These will in throngs before my mind intrude:  
     But no confusion, no disturbance rude  
 Do they occasion; 'tis a pleasing chime.  
 So the unnumber'd sounds that evening store;  
 The songs of birds—the whisp'ring of the leaves—  
     The voice of waters—the great bell that heaves  
 With solemn sound,—and thousand others more,  
     That distance of recognizance bereaves,  
 Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

9

## V

## TO A FRIEND WHO SENT ME SOME ROSES

As late I rambled in the happy fields,  
     What time the sky-lark shakes the tremulous dew  
     From his lush clover covert;—when anew  
 Adventurous knights take up their dinted shields:  
 I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,  
     A fresh-blown musk-rose; 'twas the first that threw  
     Its sweets upon the summer: graceful it grew  
 As is the wand that queen Titania wields.  
 And, as I feasted on its fragrancy,  
     I thought the garden-rose it far excell'd:  
 But when, O Wells! thy roses came to me  
     My sense with their deliciousness was spell'd:  
 Soft voices had they, that with tender plea  
     Whisper'd of peace, and truth, and friendliness unquell'd.

10

*June 29, 1816.*

## VI

## TO G. A. W.

[GEORGIANA AUGUSTA WYLIE]

NYMPH of the downward smile and sidelong glance,  
 In what diviner moments of the day  
 Art thou most lovely?—when gone far astray  
 Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance,  
 Or when serenely wand'ring in a trance  
 Of sober thought?—or when starting away  
 With careless robe to meet the morning ray  
 Thou spar'st the flowers in thy mazy dance?  
 Haply 'tis when thy ruby lips part sweetly,  
 And so remain, because thou listenest: 10  
 But thou to please wert nurtured so completely  
 That I can never tell what mood is best.  
 I shall as soon pronounce which Grace more neatly  
 Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

## VII

O SOLITUDE! if I must with thee dwell,  
 Let it not be among the jumbled heap  
 Of murky buildings; climb with me the steep,—  
 Nature's observatory—whence the dell,  
 Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,  
 May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep  
 'Mongst boughs pavillion'd, where the deer's swift leap  
 Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell.  
 But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,  
 Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind, 10  
 Whose words are images of thoughts refin'd,  
 Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be  
 Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,  
 When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

## VIII

## TO MY BROTHERS

SMALL, busy flames play through the fresh laid coals,  
 And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep  
 Like whispers of the household gods that keep  
 A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.  
 And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,



Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,  
 Upon the lore so voluble and deep,  
 That aye at fall of night our care condole.  
 This is your birth-day Tom, and I rejoice  
 That thus it passes smoothly, quietly.  
 Many such eves of gently whisp'ring noise  
 May we together pass, and calmly try  
 What are this world's true joys,—ere the great voice,  
 From its fair face, shall bid our spirits fly.  
*November 18, 1816.*

10

## IX

KEEN, fitful gusts are whisp'ring here and there  
 Among the bushes half leafless, and dry;  
 The stars look very cold about the sky,  
 And I have many miles on foot to fare.  
 Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,  
 Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,  
 Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,  
 Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair:  
 For I am brimfull of the friendliness  
 That in a little cottage I have found;  
 Of fair-hair'd Milton's eloquent distress,  
 And all his love for gentle Lycid drown'd;  
 Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,  
 And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

10

## X

To one who has been long in city pent,  
 'Tis very sweet to look into the fair  
 And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer  
 Full in the smile of the blue firmament.  
 Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,  
 Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair  
 Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair  
 And gentle tale of love and languishment?  
 Returning home at evening, with an ear  
 Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye  
 Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,  
 He mourns that day so soon has glided by:  
 E'en like the passage of an angel's tear  
 That falls through the clear ether silently.

10

## XI

## ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,  
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
 Round many western islands have I been  
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
 That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;  
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:  
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
 When a new planet swims into his ken;  
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
 He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men  
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—  
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

10

## XII

## ON LEAVING SOME FRIENDS AT AN EARLY HOUR

GIVE me a golden pen, and let me lean  
 On heap'd up flowers, in regions clear, and far;  
 Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,  
 Or hand of hymning angel, when 'tis seen  
 The silver strings of heavenly harp atween:  
 And let there glide by many a pearly car,  
 Pink robes, and wavy hair, and diamond jar,  
 And half discovered wings, and glances keen.  
 The while let music wander round my ears,  
 And as it reaches each delicious ending,  
 Let me write down a line of glorious tone,  
 And full of many wonders of the spheres:  
 For what a height my spirit is contending!  
 'Tis not content so soon to be alone.

10

## XIII

## ADDRESSED TO HAYDON

HIGHMINDEDNESS, a jealousy for good,  
 A loving-kindness for the great man's fame,  
 Dwells here and there with people of no name,  
 In noisome alley, and in pathless wood:  
 And where we think the truth least understood,

Oft may be found a "singleness of aim,"  
 That ought to frighten into hooded shame  
 A money-mong'ring, pitiable brood.  
 How glorious this affection for the cause  
 Of stedfast genius, toiling gallantly!  
 What when a stout unbending champion awes  
 Envy, and Malice to their native sty?  
 Unnumber'd souls breathe out a still applause,  
 Proud to behold him in his country's eye.

10

## XIV

## ADDRESSED TO THE SAME

GREAT spirits now on earth are sojourning;  
 He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,  
 Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,  
 Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing:  
 He of the rose, the violet, the spring,  
 The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake:  
 And lo!—whose stedfastness would never take  
 A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.  
 And other spirits there are standing apart  
 Upon the forehead of the age to come;  
 These, these will give the world another heart,  
 And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum  
 Of mighty workings?—  
 Listen awhile, ye nations, and be dumb.

10

## XV

## ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

THE poetry of earth is never dead:  
 When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,  
 And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run  
 From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;  
 That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead  
 In summer luxury,—he has never done  
 With his delights; for when tired out with fun  
 He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.  
 The poetry of earth is ceasing never:  
 On a lone winter evening, when the frost  
 Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills  
 The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,  
 And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,  
 The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

10

*December 30, 1816.*

## XVI

## TO KOSCIUSKO

GOOD Kosciusko, thy great name alone  
   Is a full harvest whence to reap high feeling;  
   It comes upon us like the glorious pealing  
 Of the wide spheres—an everlasting tone.  
 And now it tells me, that in worlds unknown,  
   The names of heroes, burst from clouds concealing,  
   And change to harmonies, for ever stealing  
 Through cloudless blue, and round each silver throne.  
 It tells me too, that on a happy day,  
   When some good spirit walks upon the earth,  
   Thy name with Alfred's, and the great of yore  
   Gently commingling, gives tremendous birth  
 To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far away  
   To where the great God lives for evermore.  
*December, 1816.*

10

## XVII

HAPPY is England! I could be content  
   To see no other verdure than its own;  
   To feel no other breezes than are blown  
 Through its tall woods with high romances blent:  
 Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment  
   For skies Italian, and an inward groan  
   To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,  
 And half forget what world or worldling meant.  
 Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters;  
   Enough their simple loveliness for me,  
   Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging:  
 Yet do I often warmly burn to see  
   Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,  
 And float with them about the summer waters.

10

## SLEEP AND POETRY

"As I lay in my bed slepe full unmete  
"Was unto me, but why that I ne might  
"Rest I ne wist, for there n'as erthly wight  
"(As I suppose) had more of hertis ese  
"Than I, for I n'ad sicknesse, nor disease."

CHAUCER.

WHAT is more gentle than a wind in summer?  
What is more soothing than the pretty hummer  
That stays one moment in an open flower,  
And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower?  
What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing  
In a green island, far from all men's knowing?  
More healthful than the leafiness of dales?  
More secret than a nest of nightingales?  
More serene than Cordelia's countenance?  
More full of visions than a high romance? 10  
What, but thee Sleep? Soft closer of our eyes!  
Low murmurer of tender lullabies!  
Light hoverer around our happy pillows!  
Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows!  
Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses!  
Most happy listener! when the morning blesses  
Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes  
That glance so brightly at the new sun-rise.

But what is higher beyond thought than thee?  
Fresher than berries of a mountain tree? 20  
More strange, more beautiful, more smooth, more regal,  
Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim-seen eagle?  
What is it? And to what shall I compare it?  
It has a glory, and naught else can share it:  
The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy,  
Chasing away all worldliness and folly;  
Coming sometimes like fearful claps of thunder,  
Or the low rumblings earth's regions under;  
And sometimes like a gentle whispering  
Of all the secrets of some wond'rous thing 30  
That breathes about us in the vacant air;  
So that we look around with prying stare,  
Perhaps to see shapes of light, aerial limning,  
And catch soft floatings from a faint-heard hymning;  
To see the laurel wreath, on high suspended,  
That is to crown our name when life is ended.

Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice,  
 And from the heart up-springs, rejoice! rejoice!  
 Sounds which will reach the Framer of all things,  
 And die away in ardent mutterings.

40

No one who once the glorious sun has seen,  
 And all the clouds, and felt his bosom clean  
 For his great Maker's presence, but must know  
 What 'tis I mean, and feel his being glow:  
 Therefore no insult will I give his spirit,  
 By telling what he sees from native merit.

O Poesy! for thee I hold my pen  
 That am not yet a glorious denizen  
 Of thy wide heaven—Should I rather kneel  
 Upon some mountain-top until I feel 50  
 A glowing splendour round about me hung,  
 And echo back the voice of thine own tongue?  
 O Poesy! for thee I grasp my pen  
 That am not yet a glorious denizen  
 Of thy wide heaven; yet, to my ardent prayer,  
 Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air,  
 Smooth'd for intoxication by the breath  
 Of flowering bays, that I may die a death  
 Of luxury, and my young spirit follow  
 The morning sun-beams to the great Apollo 60  
 Like a fresh sacrifice; or, if I can bear  
 The o'erwhelming sweets, 'twill bring to me the fair  
 Visions of all places: a bowery nook  
 Will be elysium—an eternal book  
 Whence I may copy many a lovely saying  
 About the leaves, and flowers—about the playing  
 Of nymphs in woods, and fountains; and the shade  
 Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid;  
 And many a verse from so strange influence  
 That we must ever wonder how, and whence 70  
 It came. Also imaginings will hover  
 Round my fire-side, and haply there discover  
 Vistas of solemn beauty, where I'd wander  
 In happy silence, like the clear Meander  
 Through its lone vales; and where I found a spot  
 Of awfuller shade, or an enchanted grot,  
 Or a green hill o'erspread with chequer'd dress  
 Of flowers, and fearful from its loveliness,  
 Write on my tablets all that was permitted,  
 All that was for our human senses fitted. 80

Then the events of this wide world I'd seize  
 Like a strong giant, and my spirit tease  
 Till at its shoulders it should proudly see  
 Wings to find out an immortality.

Stop and consider! life is but a day;  
 A fragile dew-drop on its perilous way  
 From a tree's summit; a poor Indian's sleep  
 While his boat hastens to the monstrous steep  
 Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan?  
 Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown;  
 The reading of an ever-changing tale;  
 The light uplifting of a maiden's veil;  
 A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air;  
 A laughing school-boy, without grief or care,  
 Riding the springy branches of an elm.

90

O for ten years, that I may overwhelm  
 Myself in poesy; so I may do the deed  
 That my own soul has to itself decreed.  
 Then will I pass the countries that I see  
 In long perspective, and continually  
 Taste their pure fountains. First the realm I'll pass  
 Of Flora, and old Pan: sleep in the grass,  
 Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,  
 And choose each pleasure that my fancy sees;  
 Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady places,  
 To woo sweet kisses from averted faces,—  
 Play with their fingers, touch their shoulders white  
 Into a pretty shrinking with a bite  
 As hard as lips can make it: till agreed,  
 A lovely tale of human life we'll read.  
 And one will teach a tame dove how it best  
 May fan the cool air gently o'er my rest;  
 Another, bending o'er her nimble tread,  
 Will set a green robe floating round her head,  
 And still will dance with ever varied ease,  
 Smiling upon the flowers and the trees:  
 Another will entice me on, and on  
 Through almond blossoms and rich cinnamon;  
 Till in the bosom of a leafy world  
 We rest in silence, like two gems upcurl'd  
 In the recesses of a pearly shell.

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120

And can I ever bid these joys farewell?  
 Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,  
 Where I may find the agonies, the strife

Of human hearts: for lo! I see afar,  
 O'ersailing the blue cragginess, a car  
 And steeds with streamy manes—the charioteer  
 Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear:  
 And now the numerous tramlings quiver lightly  
 Along a huge cloud's ridge; and now with sprightly  
 Wheel downward come they into fresher skies, 131  
 Tipt round with silver from the sun's bright eyes.  
 Still downward with capacious whirl they glide;  
 And now I see them on the green-hill's side  
 In breezy rest among the nodding stalks.  
 The charioteer with wond'rous gesture talks  
 To the trees and mountains; and there soon appear  
 Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear,  
 Passing along before a dusky space  
 Made by some mighty oaks: as they would chace 140  
 Some ever-fleeting music on they sweep.  
 Lo! how they murmur, laugh, and smile, and weep:  
 Some with upholden hand and mouth severe;  
 Some with their faces muffled to the ear  
 Between their arms; some, clear in youthful bloom,  
 Go glad and smilingly athwart the gloom;  
 Some looking back, and some with upward gaze;  
 Yes, thousands in a thousand different ways  
 Flit onward—now a lovely wreath of girls  
 Dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls; 150  
 And now broad wings. Most awfully intent  
 The driver of those steeds is forward bent,  
 And seems to listen: O that I might know  
 All that he writes with such a hurrying glow.

The visions all are fled—the car is fled  
 Into the light of heaven, and in their stead  
 A sense of real things comes doubly strong,  
 And, like a muddy stream, would bear along  
 My soul to nothingness: but I will strive  
 Against all doubtings, and will keep alive 160  
 The thought of that same chariot, and the strange  
 Journey it went.

Is there so small a range  
 In the present strength of mankind, that the high  
 Imagination cannot freely fly  
 As she was wont of old? prepare her steeds,  
 Paw up against the light, and do strange deeds  
 Upon the clouds? Has she not shown us all?  
 From the clear space of ether, to the small



Breath of new buds unfolding? From the meaning  
 Of Jove's large eye-brow, to the tender greening 170  
 Of April meadows? Here her altar shone,  
 E'en in this isle; and who could paragon  
 The fervid choir that lifted up a noise  
 Of harmony, to where it aye will poise  
 Its mighty self of convoluting sound,  
 Huge as a planet, and like that roll round,  
 Eternally around a dizzy void?  
 Ay, in those days the Muses were nigh cloy'd  
 With honours; nor had any other care  
 Than to sing out and soothe their wavy hair. 180

Could all this be forgotten? Yes, a schism  
 Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,  
 Made great Apollo blush for this his land.  
 Men were thought wise who could not understand  
 His glories: with a puling infant's force  
 They sway'd about upon a rocking horse,  
 And thought it Pegasus. Ah dismal soul'd!  
 The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd  
 Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue 190  
 Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew  
 Of summer nights collected still to make  
 The morning precious: beauty was awake!  
 Why were ye not awake? But ye were dead  
 To things ye knew not of,—were closely wed  
 To musty laws lined out with wretched rule  
 And compass vile: so that ye taught a school  
 Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,  
 Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,  
 Their verses tallied. Easy was the task:  
 A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask 200  
 Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race!  
 That blasphemed the bright Lyrist to his face,  
 And did not know it,—no, they went about,  
 Holding a poor, decrepid standard out  
 Mark'd with most flimsy mottos, and in large  
 The name of one Boileau!

O ye whose charge  
 It is to hover round our pleasant hills!  
 Whose congregated majesty so fills  
 My boundly reverence, that I cannot trace  
 Your hallowed names, in this unholy place, 210  
 So near those common folk; did not their shames.  
 Affright you? Did our old lamenting Thames

Delight you? Did ye never cluster round  
 Delicious Avon, with a mournful sound,  
 And weep? Or did ye wholly bid adieu  
 To regions where no more the laurel grew?  
 Or did ye stay to give a welcoming  
 To some lone spirits who could proudly sing  
 Their youth away, and die? 'Twas even so:  
 But let me think away those times of woe: 220  
 Now 'tis a fairer season; ye have breathed  
 Rich benedictions o'er us; ye have wreathed  
 Fresh garlands: for sweet music has been heard  
 In many places;—some has been upstirr'd  
 From out its crystal dwelling in a lake,  
 By a swan's ebon bill; from a thick brake,  
 Nested and quiet in a valley mild,  
 Bubbles a pipe; fine sounds are floating wild  
 About the earth: happy are ye and glad. 229

These things are doubtless: yet in truth we've had  
 Strange thunders from the potency of song;  
 Mingled indeed with what is sweet and strong,  
 From majesty: but in clear truth the themes  
 Are ugly clubs, the Poets' Polyphemes  
 Disturbing the grand sea. A drainless shower  
 Of light is poesy; 'tis the supreme of power;  
 'Tis might half slumb'ring on its own right arm.  
 The very archings of her eye-lids charm  
 A thousand willing agents to obey,  
 And still she governs with the mildest sway: 240  
 But strength alone though of the Muses born  
 Is like a fallen angel: trees uptorn,  
 Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres  
 Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs,  
 And thorns of life; forgetting the great end  
 Of poesy, that it should be a friend  
 To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of man.

Yet I rejoice: a myrtle fairer than  
 E'er grew in Paphos, from the bitter weeds  
 Lifts its sweet head into the air, and feeds 250  
 A silent space with ever sprouting green.  
 All tenderest birds there find a pleasant screen,  
 Creep through the shade with jaunty fluttering,  
 Nibble the little cupped flowers and sing.  
 Then let us clear away the choking thorns  
 From round its gentle stem; let the young fawns,

Yeaned in after times, when we are flown,  
 Find a fresh sward beneath it, overgrown  
 With simple flowers: let there nothing be  
 More boisterous than a lover's bended knee;  
 Nought more ungentle than the placid look  
 Of one who leans upon a closed book;  
 Nought more untr tranquil than the grassy slopes  
 Between two hills. All hail delightful hopes!  
 As she was wont, th' imagination  
 Into most lovely labyrinths will be gone,  
 And they shall be accounted poet kings  
 Who simply tell the most heart-easing things.  
 O may these joys be ripe before I die.

260

Will not some say that I presumptuously  
 Have spoken? that from hastening disgrace  
 'Twere better far to hide my foolish face?  
 That whining boyhood should with reverence bow  
 Ere the dread thunderbolt could reach? How!  
 If I do hide myself, it sure shall be  
 In the very fane, the light of Poesy:  
 If I do fall, at least I will be laid  
 Beneath the silence of a poplar shade;  
 And over me the grass shall be smooth shaven;  
 And there shall be a kind memorial graven.  
 But off Despondence! miserable bane!  
 They should not know thee, who athirst to gain  
 A noble end, are thirsty every hour.  
 What though I am not wealthy in the dower  
 Of spanning wisdom; though I do not know  
 The shiftings of the mighty winds that blow  
 Hither and thither all the changing thoughts  
 Of man: though no great minist'ring reason sorts  
 Out the dark mysteries of human souls  
 To clear conceiving: yet there ever rolls  
 A vast idea before me, and I glean  
 Therefrom my liberty; thence too I've seen  
 The end and aim of Poesy. 'Tis clear  
 As anything most true; as that the year  
 Is made of the four seasons—manifest  
 As a large cross, some old cathedral's crest,  
 Lifted to the white clouds. Therefore should I  
 Be but the essence of deformity,  
 A coward, did my very eye-lids wink  
 At speaking out what I have dared to think.  
 Ah! rather let me like a madman run  
 Over some precipice; let the hot sun

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300

Melt my Dedalian wings, and drive me down  
 Convuls'd and headlong! Stay! an inward frown  
 Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile.  
 An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,  
 Spreads awfully before me. How much toil!  
 How many days! what desperate turmoil!  
 Ere I can have explored its widenesses.  
 Ah, what a task! upon my bended knees, 310  
 I could unsay those--no, impossible!  
 Impossible!

For sweet relief I'll dwell  
 On humbler thoughts, and let this strange assay  
 Begun in gentleness die so away.  
 E'en now all tumult from my bosom fades:  
 I turn full hearted to the friendly aids  
 That smooth the path of honour; brotherhood,  
 And friendliness the nurse of mutual good.  
 The hearty grasp that sends a pleasant sonnet 320  
 Into the brain ere one can think upon it;  
 The silence when some rhymes are coming out;  
 And when they're come, the very pleasant rout:  
 The message certain to be done to-morrow.  
 'Tis perhaps as well that it should be to borrow  
 Some precious book from out its snug retreat,  
 To cluster round it when we next shall meet.  
 Scarce can I scribble on; for lovely airs  
 Are fluttering round the room like doves in pairs;  
 Many delights of that glad day recalling,  
 When first my senses caught their tender falling. 330  
 And with these airs come forms of elegance  
 Stooping their shoulders o'er a horse's prance,  
 Careless, and grand—fingers soft and round  
 Parting luxuriant curls;—and the swift bound  
 Of Bacchus from his chariot, when his eye  
 Made Ariadne's cheek look blushinglly.  
 Thus I remember all the pleasant flow  
 Of words at opening a portfolio.

Things such as these are ever harbingers  
 To trains of peaceful images: the stirs 340  
 Of a swan's neck unseen among the rushes:  
 A linnet starting all about the bushes:  
 A butterfly, with golden wings broad parted,  
 Nestling a rose, convuls'd as though it smarted  
 With over pleasure—many, many more,  
 Might I indulge at large in all my store

Of luxuries: yet I must not forget  
 Sleep, quiet with his poppy coronet:  
 For what there may be worthy in these rhymes  
 I partly owe to him: and thus, the chimes 350  
 Of friendly voices had just given place  
 To as sweet a silence, when I 'gan retrace  
 The pleasant day, upon a couch at ease.  
 It was a poet's house who keeps the keys  
 Of pleasure's temple. Round about were hung  
 The glorious features of the bards who sung  
 In other ages—cold and sacred busts  
 Smiled at each other. Happy he who trusts  
 To clear Futurity his darling fame!  
 Then there were fauns and satyrs taking aim 360  
 At swelling apples with a frisky leap  
 And reaching fingers, 'mid a luscious heap  
 Of vine-leaves. Then there rose to view a fane  
 Of liny marble, and thereto a train  
 Of nymphs approaching fairly o'er the sward:  
 One, loveliest, holding her white hand toward  
 The dazzling sun-rise: two sisters sweet  
 Bending their graceful figures till they meet  
 Over the trippings of a little child:  
 And some are hearing, eagerly, the wild 370  
 Thrilling liquidity of dewy piping.  
 See, in another picture, nymphs are wiping  
 Cherishingly Diana's timorous limbs;—  
 A fold of lawny mantle dabbling swims  
 At the bath's edge, and keeps a gentle motion  
 With the subsiding crystal: as when ocean  
 Heaves calmly its broad swelling smoothness o'er  
 Its rocky marge, and balances once more  
 The patient weeds; that now unshent by foam  
 Feel all about their undulating home. 380

Sappho's meek head was there half smiling down  
 At nothing; just as though the earnest frown  
 Of over thinking had that moment gone  
 From off her brow, and left her all alone.  
 Great Alfred's too, with anxious, pitying eyes,  
 As if he always listened to the sighs  
 Of the goaded world; and Kosciusko's worn  
 By horrid suffrance—mightily forlorn.  
 Petrarch, outstepping from the shady green,  
 Starts at the sight of Laura; nor can wean 390  
 His eyes from her sweet face. Most happy they!  
 For over them was seen a free display

Of out-spread wings, and from between them shone  
The face of Poesy: from off her throne  
She overlook'd things that I scarce could tell.  
The very sense of where I was might well  
Keep Sleep aloof: but more than that there came  
Thought after thought to nourish up the flame  
Within my breast; so that the morning light  
Surprised me even from a sleepless night;  
And up I rose refresh'd, and glad, and gay,  
Resolving to begin that very day  
These lines; and howsoever they be done,  
I leave them as a father does his son.

ENDYMION  
A POETIC ROMANCE

INSCRIBED  
TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
THOMAS CHATTERTON  
1818

## PREFACE

KNOWING within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good;—it will not: the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness: for I wish to try once more, before I bid it farewell.

[TEIGNMOUTH] April 10, 1818.



## ENDYMION:

### BOOK I

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.  
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways 10  
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,  
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
Trees old, and young, sprouting a shady boon  
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils  
With the green world they live in; and clear rills  
That for themselves a cooling covert make  
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,  
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:  
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms 20  
We have imagined for the mighty dead;  
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:  
An endless fountain of immortal drink,  
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences  
For one short hour; no, even as the trees  
That whisper round a temple become soon  
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,  
The passion poesy, glories infinite,  
Haunt us till they become a cheering light 30  
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,  
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,  
They always must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I  
Will trace the story of Endymion.  
The very music of the name has gone

Into my being, and each pleasant scene  
 Is growing fresh before me as the green  
 Of our own vallies: so I will begin  
 Now while I cannot hear the city's din; 40  
 Now while the early budders are just new,  
 And run in mazes of the youngest hue  
 About old forests; while the willow trails  
 Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails  
 Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year  
 Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer  
 My little boat, for many quiet hours,  
 With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.  
 Many and many a verse I hope to write,  
 Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white, 50  
 Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees  
 Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,  
 I must be near the middle of my story.  
 O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,  
 See it half finish'd: but let Autumn bold,  
 With universal tinge of sober gold,  
 Be all about me when I make an end.  
 And now at once, adventuresome, I send  
 My herald thought into a wilderness:  
 There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress 60  
 My uncertain path with green, that I may speed  
 Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread  
 A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed  
 So plenteously all weed-hidden roots  
 Into o'er-hanging boughs, and precious fruits.  
 And it had gloomy shades, sequestered deep,  
 Where no man went; and if from shepherd's keep  
 A lamb stray'd far a-down those inmost glens,  
 Never again saw he the happy pens 70  
 Whither his brethren, bleating with content,  
 Over the hills at every nightfall went.  
 Among the shepherds, 'twas believed ever,  
 That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever  
 From the white flock, but pass'd unworried  
 By angry wolf, or pard with prying head,  
 Until it came to some unfooted plains  
 Where fed the herds of Pan: aye great his gains  
 Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,  
 Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny, 80  
 And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly  
 To a wide lawn, whence one could only see

Stems thronging all around between the swell  
Of turf and slanting branches: who could tell  
The freshness of the space of heaven above,  
Edg'd round with dark tree tops? through which a dove  
Would often beat its wings, and often too  
A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness  
There stood a marble altar, with a tress 90  
Of flowers budded newly; and the dew  
Had taken fairy phantasies to strew  
Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,  
And so the dawned light in pomp receive.  
For 'twas the morn: Apollo's upward fire  
Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre  
Of brightness so unsullied, that therein  
A melancholy spirit well might win  
Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine 100  
Into the winds: rain-scented eglantine  
Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun;  
The lark was lost in him; cold springs had run  
To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass;  
Man's voice was on the mountains; and the mass  
Of nature's lives and wonders puls'd tenfold,  
To feel this sun-rise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the dawn  
Were busiest, into that self-same lawn  
All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped 110  
A troop of little children garlanded;  
Who gathering round the altar, seem'd to pry  
Earnestly round as wishing to espy  
Some folk of holiday: nor had they waited  
For many moments, ere their ears were sated  
With a faint breath of music, which ev'n then  
Fill'd out its voice, and died away again.  
Within a little space again it gave  
Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,  
To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking  
Through copse-clad vallies,—ere their death, o'ertaking  
The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea. 121

And now, as deep into the wood as we  
Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmered light  
Fair faces and a rush of garments white,  
Plainer and plainer showing, till at last  
Into the widest alley they all past,

Making directly for the woodland altar.  
 O kindly muse! let not my weak tongue faulter  
 In telling of this goodly company,  
 Of their old piety, and of their glee: 130  
 But let a portion of ethereal dew  
 Fall on my head, and presently unmew  
 My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,  
 To stammer where old Chaucer us'd to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced along,  
 Bearing the burden of a shepherd song;  
 Each having a white wicker over brimm'd  
 With April's tender younglings: next, well trimm'd,  
 A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt looks 140  
 As may be read of in Arcadian books;  
 Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,  
 When the great deity, for earth too ripe,  
 Let his divinity o'erflowing die  
 In music, through the vales of Thessaly:  
 Some idly trail'd their sheep-hooks on the ground,  
 And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound  
 With ebon-tipped flutes: close after these,  
 Now coming from beneath the forest trees,  
 A venerable priest full soberly, 150  
 Begirt with ministring looks: alway his eye  
 Stedfast upon the matted turf he kept,  
 And after him his sacred vestments swept.  
 From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,  
 Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light;  
 And in his left he held a basket full  
 Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull:  
 Wild thyme, and valley-lillies whiter still  
 Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.  
 His aged head, crowned with beechen wreath,  
 Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth 160  
 Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd  
 Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud  
 Their share of the ditty. After them appear'd,  
 Up-followed by a multitude that rear'd  
 Their voices to the clouds, a fair wrought car  
 Easily rolling so as scarce to mar  
 The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown:  
 Who stood therein did seem of great renown  
 Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,  
 Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown; 170  
 And, for those simple times, his garments were  
 A chieftain king's: beneath his breast, half bare,

Was hung a silver bugle, and between  
 His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen.  
 A smile was on his countenance; he seem'd,  
 To common lookers on, like one who dream'd  
 Of idleness in groves Elysian:  
 But there were some who feelingly could scan  
 A lurking trouble in his nether lip,  
 And see that oftentimes the reins would slip 180  
 Through his forgotten hands: then would they sigh,  
 And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,  
 Of logs piled solemnly.—Ah, well-a-day,  
 Why should our young Endymion pine away!

Soon the assembly, in a circle rang'd,  
 Stood silent round the shrine: each look was chang'd  
 To sudden veneration: women meek  
 Beckon'd their sons to silence; while each cheek  
 Of virgin bloom paled gently for slight fear.  
 Endymion too, without a forest peer, 190  
 Stood, wan, and pale, and with an awed face,  
 Among his brothers of the mountain chace.  
 In midst of all, the venerable priest  
 Eyed them with joy from greatest to the least,  
 And, after lifting up his aged hands,  
 Thus spake he: "Men of Latmos! shepherd bands!  
 Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks:  
 Whether descended from beneath the rocks  
 That overtop your mountains; whether come 200  
 From vallies where the pipe is never dumb;  
 Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs  
 Blue hare-bells lightly, and where prickly furze  
 Buds lavish gold; or ye, whose precious charge  
 Nibble their fill at ocean's very marge,  
 Whose mellow reeds are touch'd with sounds forlorn  
 By the dim echoes of Old Triton's horn:  
 Mothers and wives! who day by day prepare  
 The scrip, with needments, for the mountain air;  
 And all ye gentle girls who foster up 210  
 Udderless lambs, and in a little cup  
 Will put choice honey for a favoured youth:  
 Yea, every one attend! for in good truth  
 Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.  
 Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than  
 Night-swollen mushrooms? Are not our wide plains  
 Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not rains  
 Green'd over April's lap? No howling sad  
 Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had

Great bounty from Endymion our lord.  
 The earth is glad: the merry lark has pour'd 220  
 His early song against yon breezy sky,  
 That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity."

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap'd a spire  
 Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;  
 Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod  
 With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.  
 Now while the earth was drinking it, and while  
 Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,  
 And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright  
 'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light 230  
 Spread greyly eastward, thus a chorus sang:

"O THOU, whose mighty palace roof doth hang  
 From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth  
 Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death  
 Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;  
 Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress  
 Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken;  
 And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken  
 The dreary melody of bedded reeds—  
 In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds 240  
 The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth;  
 Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth  
 Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx—do thou now,  
 By thy love's milky brow!  
 By all the trembling mazes that she ran,  
 Hear us, great Pan!

"O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles  
 Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,  
 What time thou wanderest at eventide 250  
 Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side  
 Of thine enmossed realms: O thou, to whom  
 Broad leaved fig trees even now foredoom  
 Their ripen'd fruitage; yellow girted bees  
 Their golden honeycombs; our village leas  
 Their fairest blossom'd beans and poppied corn;  
 The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,  
 To sing for thee; low creeping strawberries  
 Their summer coolness; pent up butterflies  
 Their freckled wings; yea, the fresh budding year  
 All its completions—be quickly near, 260  
 By every wind that nods the mountain pine,  
 O forester divine!

"Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies  
 For willing service; whether to surprise  
 The squatted hare while in half sleeping fit;  
 Or upward ragged precipices flit  
 To save poor lambkins from the eagle's maw;  
 Or by mysterious enticement draw  
 Bewildered shepherds to their path again;  
 Or to tread breathless round the frothy main, 270  
 And gather up all fancifullest shells  
 For thee to tumble into Naiads' cells,  
 And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping;  
 Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,  
 The while they pelt each other on the crown  
 With silvery oak apples, and fir cones brown—  
 By all the echoes that about thee ring,  
 Hear us, O satyr king!

"O Harkener to the loud clapping shears  
 While ever and anon to his shorn peers 280  
 A ram goes bleating: Winder of the horn,  
 When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn  
 Anger our huntsmen: Breather round our farms,  
 To keep off mildews, and all weather harms:  
 Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,  
 That come a swooning over hollow grounds,  
 And wither drearily on barren moors:  
 Dread opener of the mysterious doors  
 Leading to universal knowledge—see,  
 Great son of Dryope, 290  
 The many that are come to pay their vows  
 With leaves about their brows!

"Be still the unimaginable lodge  
 For solitary thinkings; such as dodge  
 Conception to the very bourne of heaven,  
 Then leave the naked brain: be still the leaven,  
 That spreading in this dull and clodded earth  
 Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth:  
 Be still a symbol of immensity;  
 A firmament reflected in a sea; 300  
 An element filling the space between;  
 An unknown—but no more: we humbly screen  
 With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,  
 And giving out a shout most heaven rending,  
 Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,  
 Upon thy Mount Lycean!"

Even while they brought the burden to a close,  
 A shout from the whole multitude arose,  
 That lingered in the air like dying rolls  
 Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian shoals 310  
 Of dolphins bob their noses through the brine.  
 Meantime, on shady levels, mossy fine,  
 Young companies nimbly began dancing  
 To the swift treble pipe, and humming string.  
 Aye, those fair living forms swam heavily  
 To tunes forgotten—out of memory:  
 Fair creatures! whose young children's children bred  
 Thermopylæ its heroes—not yet dead,  
 But in old marbles ever beautiful.  
 High genitors, unconscious did they cull 320  
 Time's sweet first-fruits—they danc'd to weariness,  
 And then in quiet circles did they press  
 The hillock turf, and caught the latter end  
 Of some strange history, potent to send  
 A young mind from its bodily tenement.  
 Or they might watch the quoit-pitchers, intent  
 On either side; pitying the sad death  
 Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath  
 Of Zephyr slew him,—Zephyr penitent,  
 Who now, ere Phœbus mounts the firmament, 330  
 Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain.  
 The archers too, upon a wider plain,  
 Beside the feathery whizzing of the shaft,  
 And the dull twanging bowstring, and the raft  
 Branch down sweeping from a tall ash top,  
 Call'd up a thousand thoughts to envelope  
 Those who would watch. Perhaps, the trembling knee  
 And frantic gape of lonely Niobe,  
 Poor, lonely Niobe! when her lovely young  
 Were dead and gone, and her caressing tongue 340  
 Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip,  
 And very, very deadliness did nip  
 Her motherly cheeks. Arous'd from this sad mood  
 By one, who at a distance loud halloo'd,  
 Uplifting his strong bow into the air,  
 Many might after brighter visions stare:  
 After the Argonauts, in blind amaze  
 Tossing about on Neptune's restless ways,  
 Until, from the horizon's vaulted side,  
 There shot a golden splendour far and wide, 350  
 Spangling those million poutings of the brine  
 With quivering ore: 'twas even an awful shine



From the exaltation of Apollo's bow;  
 A heavenly beacon in their dreary woe.  
 Who thus were ripe for high contemplating,  
 Might turn their steps towards the sober ring  
 Where sat Endymion and the aged priest  
 'Mong shepherds gone in eld, whose looks increas'd  
 The silvery setting of their mortal star.  
 There they discours'd upon the fragile bar 360  
 That keeps us from our homes ethereal;  
 And what our duties there: to nightly call  
 Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer weather;  
 To summon all the downiest clouds together  
 For the sun's purple couch; to emulate  
 In minist'ring the potent rule of fate  
 With speed of fire-tail'd exhalations;  
 To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who cons  
 Sweet poesy by moonlight: besides these,  
 A world of other unguess'd offices. 370  
 Anon they wander'd, by divine converse,  
 Into Elysium; vying to rehearse  
 Each one his own anticipated bliss.  
 One felt heart-certain that he could not miss  
 His quick gone love, among fair blossom'd boughs,  
 Where every zephyr-sigh pouts, and endows  
 Her lips with music for the welcoming.  
 Another wish'd, mid that eternal spring,  
 To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,  
 Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond vales: 380  
 Who, suddenly, should stoop through the smooth wind,  
 And with the balmiest leaves his temples bind;  
 And, ever after, through those regions be  
 His messenger, his little Mercury.  
 Some were athirst in soul to see again  
 Their fellow huntsmen o'er the wide champaign  
 In times long past; to sit with them, and talk  
 Of all the chances in their earthly walk;  
 Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores  
 Of happiness, to when upon the moors, 390  
 Benighted, close they huddled from the cold,  
 And shar'd their famish'd scrips. Thus all out-told  
 Their fond imaginations,—saving him  
 Whose eyelids curtain'd up their jewels dim,  
 Endymion: yet hourly had he striven  
 To hide the cankering venom, that had riven  
 His fainting recollections. Now indeed  
 His senses had swoon'd off: he did not heed

The sudden silence, or the whispers low,  
 Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe,  
 Or anxious calls, or close of trembling palms,  
 Or maiden's sigh, that grief itself embalms:  
 But in the self-same fixed trance he kept,  
 Like one who on the earth had never slept.  
 Aye, even as dead-still as a marble man,  
 Frozen in that old tale Arabian. 400

Who whispers him so pantingly and close?  
 Peona, his sweet sister: of all those,  
 His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she made,  
 And breath'd a sister's sorrow to persuade 410  
 A yielding up, a cradling on her care.  
 Her eloquence did breathe away the curse:  
 She led him, like some midnight spirit nurse  
 Of happy changes in emphatic dreams,  
 Along a path between two little streams,—  
 Guarding his forehead, with her round elbow,  
 From low-grown branches, and his footsteps slow  
 From stumbling over stumps and hillocks small;  
 Until they came to where these streamlets fall,  
 With mingled bubblings and a gentle rush, 420  
 Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush  
 With crystal mocking of the trees and sky.  
 A little shallop, floating there hard by,  
 Pointed its beak over the fringed bank;  
 And soon it lightly dipt, and rose, and sank,  
 And dipt again, with the young couple's weight,—  
 Peona guiding, through the water straight,  
 Towards a bowery island opposite;  
 Which gaining presently, she steered light  
 Into a shady, fresh, and ripply cove, 430  
 Where nested was an arbour, overwove  
 By many a summer's silent fingering;  
 To whose cool bosom she was used to bring  
 Her playmates, with their needle broidery,  
 And minstrel memories of times gone by.

So she was gently glad to see him laid  
 Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,  
 On her own couch, new made of flower leaves,  
 Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves  
 When last the sun his autumn tresses shook,  
 And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls took. 440  
 Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest:  
 But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest

Peona's busy hand against his lips,  
 And still, a sleeping, held her finger-tips  
 In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps  
 A patient watch over the stream that creeps  
 Windingly by it, so the quiet maid  
 Held her in peace: so that a whispering blade  
 Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling  
 Down in the blue-bells, or a wren light rustling  
 Among sere leaves and twigs, might all be heard.

450

O magic sleep! O comfortable bird,  
 That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind  
 Till it is hush'd and smooth! O unconfin'd  
 Restraint! imprisoned liberty! great key  
 To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,  
 Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,  
 Echoing grottos, full of tumbling waves  
 And moonlight; aye, to all the mazy world  
 Of silvery enchantment!—who, upfurl'd  
 Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,  
 But renovates and lives?—Thus, in the bower,  
 Endymion was calm'd to life again.

460

Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain,  
 He said: "I feel this thine endearing love  
 All through my bosom: thou art as a dove  
 Trembling its closed eyes and sleeked wings  
 About me; and the pearliest dew not brings  
 Such morning incense from the fields of May,  
 As do those brighter drops that twinkling stray  
 From those kind eyes,—the very home and haunt  
 Of sisterly affection. Can I want

470

Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such tears?  
 Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears  
 That, any longer, I will pass my days  
 Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise  
 My voice upon the mountain-heights; once more  
 Make my horn parley from their foreheads hoar:  
 Again my trooping hounds their tongues shall loll  
 Around the breathed boar: again I'll poll  
 The fair-grown yew tree, for a chosen bow:  
 And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,  
 Again I'll linger in a sloping mead  
 To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed  
 Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered sweet,  
 And, if thy lute is here, softly intreat  
 My soul to keep in its resolved course."

480

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,  
 Shut her pure sorrow drops with glad exclaim, 490  
 And took a lute, from which there pulsing came  
 A lively prelude, fashioning the way  
 In which her voice should wander. 'Twas a lay  
 More subtle cadenced, more forest wild  
 Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child;  
 And nothing since has floated in the air  
 So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare  
 Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand;  
 For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd  
 The quick invisible strings, even though she saw 500  
 Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw  
 Before the deep intoxication.  
 But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon  
 Her self-possession—swung the lute aside,  
 And earnestly said: "Brother, 'tis vain to hide  
 That thou dost know of things mysterious,  
 Immortal, starry; such alone could thus  
 Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinn'd in aught  
 Offensive to the heavenly powers? Caught  
 A Paphian dove upon a message sent? 510  
 Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd bent  
 Sacred to Dian? Haply, thou hast seen  
 Her naked limbs among the alders green;  
 And that, alas, is death. No, I can trace  
 Something more high perplexing in thy face!"

Endymion look'd at her, and press'd her hand,  
 And said, "Art thou so pale, who wast so bland  
 And merry in our meadows? How is this?  
 Tell me thine ailment: tell me all amiss!—  
 Ah! thou hast been unhappy at the change 520  
 Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed more strange?  
 Or more complete to overwhelm surmise?  
 Ambition is so sluggard: 'tis no prize,  
 That toiling years would put within my grasp,  
 That I have sighed for: with so deadly gasp  
 No man e'er panted for a mortal love.  
 So all have set my heavier grief above  
 These things which happen. Rightly have they done:  
 I, who still saw the horizontal sun  
 Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of the world,  
 Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurl'd 531  
 My spear aloft, as signal for the chace—  
 I, who, for very sport of heart, would race

With my own steed from Araby; pluck down  
 A vulture from his towery perching; frown  
 A lion into growling, loth retire—  
 To lose, at once, all my toil-breeding fire,  
 And sing thus low! but I will ease my breast  
 Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest.

“This river does not see the naked sky,  
 Till it begins to progress silverly  
 Around the western border of the wood,  
 Whence, from a certain spot, its winding flood  
 Seems at the distance like a crescent moon:  
 And in that nook, the very pride of June,  
 Had I been used to pass my weary eves;  
 The rather for the sun unwilling leaves  
 So dear a picture of his sovereign power,  
 And I could witness his most kingly hour,  
 When he doth tighten up the golden reins,  
 And paces leisurely down amber plains  
 His snorting four. Now when his chariot last  
 Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,  
 There blossom’d suddenly a magic bed  
 Of sacred ditamy, and poppies red:  
 At which I wondered greatly, knowing well  
 That but one night had wrought this flowery spell;  
 And, sitting down close by, began to muse  
 What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I, Morpheus,  
 In passing here, his owlet pinions shook;  
 Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook  
 Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,  
 Had dipt his rod in it: such garland wealth  
 Came not by common growth. Thus on I thought,  
 Until my head was dizzy and distraught.  
 Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole  
 A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul;  
 And shaping visions all about my sight  
 Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light;  
 The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,  
 And then were gulph’d in a tumultuous swim:  
 And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell  
 The enchantment that afterwards befel?  
 Yet it was but a dream: yet such a dream  
 That never tongue, although it overteem  
 With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring,  
 Could figure out and to conception bring  
 All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay  
 Watching the zenith, where the milky way

Among the stars in virgin splendour pours; 580  
 And travelling my eye, until the doors  
 Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,  
 I became loth and fearful to alight  
 From such high soaring by a downward glance:  
 So kept me stedfast in that airy trance,  
 Spreading imaginary pinions wide.  
 When, presently, the stars began to glide,  
 And faint away, before my eager view:  
 At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,  
 And dropt my vision to the horizon's verge; 590  
 And lo! from opening clouds, I saw emerge  
 The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er  
 A shell for Neptune's goblet: she did soar  
 So passionately bright, my dazzled soul  
 Commingling with her argent spheres did roll  
 Through clear and cloudy, even when she went  
 At last into a dark and vapoury tent—  
 Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train  
 Of planets all were in the blue again.  
 To commune with those orbs, once more I rais'd 600  
 My sight right upward: but it was quite dazed  
 By a bright something, sailing down apace,  
 Making me quickly veil my eyes and face:  
 Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,  
 Who from Olympus watch our destinies!  
 Whence that completed form of all completeness?  
 Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness?  
 Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, O where  
 Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair?  
 Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun; 610  
 Not—thy soft hand, fair sister! let me shun  
 Such follying before thee—yet she had,  
 Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad;  
 And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,  
 Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,  
 Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orb'd brow;  
 The which were blended in, I know not how,  
 With such a paradise of lips and eyes,  
 Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,  
 That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings 620  
 And plays about its fancy, till the stings  
 Of human neighbourhood envenom all.  
 Unto what awful power shall I call?  
 To what high fane?—Ah! see her hovering feet,  
 More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet

Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose  
 From out her cradle shell. The wind out-blows  
 Her scarf into a fluttering pavillion;  
 'Tis blue, and over-spangled with a million  
 Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed, 630  
 Over the darkest, lushest blue-bell bed,  
 Handfuls of daisies."—"Endymion, how strange!  
 Dream within dream!"—"She took an airy range,  
 And then, towards me, like a very maid,  
 Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,  
 And press'd me by the hand: Ah! 'twas too much;  
 Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,  
 Yet held my recollection, even as one  
 Who dives three fathoms where the waters run  
 Gurgling in beds of coral: for anon, 640  
 I felt upmounted in that region  
 Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,  
 And eagles struggle with the buffeting north  
 That ballances the heavy meteor-stone;—  
 Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone,  
 But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous sky.  
 Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying high,  
 And straightway into frightful eddies swoop'd;  
 Such as aye muster where grey time has scoop'd  
 Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's side: 650  
 There hollow sounds arous'd me, and I sigh'd  
 To faint once more by looking on my bliss—  
 I was distracted; madly did I kiss  
 The wooing arms which held me, and did give  
 My eyes at once to death: but 'twas to live,  
 To take in draughts of life from the gold fount  
 Of kind and passionate looks; to count, and count  
 The moments, by some greedy help that seem'd  
 A second self, that each might be redeem'd  
 And plunder'd of its load of blessedness. 660  
 Ah, desperate mortal! I e'en dar'd to press  
 Her very cheek against my crowned lip,  
 And, at that moment, felt my body dip  
 Into a warmer air: a moment more,  
 Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store  
 Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes  
 A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,  
 Loiter'd around us; then of honey cells,  
 Made delicate from all white-flower bells;  
 And once, above the edges of our nest, 670  
 An arch face peep'd,—an Oread as I guess'd.

"Why did I dream that sleep o'er-power'd me  
 In midst of all this heaven? Why not see,  
 Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,  
 And stare them from me? But no, like a spark  
 That needs must die, although its little beam  
 Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream  
 Fell into nothing—into stupid sleep.  
 And so it was, until a gentle creep,  
 A careful moving caught my waking ears, 680  
 And up I started: Ah! my sighs, my tears,  
 My clenched hands;—for lo! the poppies hung  
 Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung  
 A heavy ditty, and the sullen day  
 Had chidden herald Hesperus away,  
 With leaden looks: the solitary breeze  
 Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did tease  
 With wayward melancholy; and I thought,  
 Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it brought  
 Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus! — 690  
 Away I wander'd—all the pleasant hues  
 Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest shades  
 Were deepest dungeons: heaths and sunny glades  
 Were full of pestilent light; our taintless rills  
 Seem'd sooty, and o'er-spread with upturn'd gills  
 Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown  
 In frightful scarlet, and its thorns out-grown  
 Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird  
 Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd  
 In little journeys, I beheld in it 700  
 A disguis'd demon, missioned to knit  
 My soul with under darkness; to entice  
 My stumblings down some monstrous precipice:  
 Therefore I eager followed, and did curse  
 The disappointment. Time, that aged nurse,  
 Rock'd me to patience. Now, thank gentle heaven!  
 These things, with all their comfortings, are given  
 To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,  
 Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea  
 Of weary life."

Thus ended he, and both 710  
 Sat silent: for the maid was very loth  
 To answer; feeling well that breathed words  
 Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as swords  
 Against the enchased crocodile, or leaps  
 Of grasshoppers against the sun. She weeps,  
 And wonders; struggles to devise some blame;  
 To put on such a look as would say, *Shame*



*On this poor weakness!* but, for all her strife,  
 She could as soon have crush'd away the life 719  
 From a sick dove. At length, to break the pause,  
 She said with trembling chance: "Is this the cause?  
 This all? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas!  
 That one who through this middle earth should pass  
 Most like a sojourning demi-god, and leave  
 His name upon the harp-string, should achieve  
 No higher bard than simple maidenhood,  
 Singing alone, and fearfully,—how the blood  
 Left his young cheek; and how he used to stray  
 He knew not where; and how he would say, *nay*,  
 If any said 'twas love: and yet 'twas love; 730  
 What could it be but love? How a ring-dove  
 Let fall a sprig of yew tree in his path;  
 And how he died: and then, that love doth scathe,  
 The gentle heart, as northern blasts do roses;  
 And then the ballad of his sad life closes  
 With sighs, and an alas!—Endymion!  
 Be rather in the trumpet's mouth,—anon  
 Among the winds at large—that all may hearken!  
 Although, before the crystal heavens darken,  
 I watch and dote upon the silver lakes 740  
 Pictur'd in western cloudiness, that takes  
 The semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands,  
 Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted strands  
 With horses prancing o'er them, palaces  
 And towers of amethyst,—would I so tease  
 My pleasant days, because I could not mount  
 Into those regions? The Morphean fount  
 Of that fine element that visions, dreams,  
 And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams  
 Into its airy channels with so subtle, 750  
 So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,  
 Circled a million times within the space  
 Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a trace,  
 A tinting of its quality: how light  
 Must dreams themselves be; seeing they're more slight  
 Than the mere nothing that engenders them!  
 Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem  
 Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick?  
 Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick  
 For nothing but a dream?" Hereat the youth 760  
 Look'd up: a conflicting of shame and ruth  
 Was in his plaited brow: yet, his eyelids  
 Widened a little, as when Zephyr bids

A little breeze to creep between the fans  
 Of careless butterflies: amid his pains  
 He seemed to taste a drop of manna-dew,  
 Full palatable; and a colour grew  
 Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeful spake.

“Peona! ever have I long’d to slake  
 My thirst for the world’s praises: nothing base, 770  
 No merely slumberous phantasm, could unlace  
 The stubborn canvas for my voyage prepar’d—  
 Though now ’tis tatter’d; leaving my bark bar’d  
 And sullenly drifting: yet my higher hope  
 Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope,  
 To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.  
 Wherein lies happiness? In that which beck  
 Our ready minds to fellowship divine,  
 A fellowship with essence; till we shine,  
 Full alchemiz’d, and free of space. Behold 780  
 The clear religion of heaven! Fold  
 A rose leaf round thy finger’s taperness,  
 And soothe thy lips: hush, when the airy stress  
 Of music’s kiss impregnates the free winds,  
 And with a sympathetic touch unbinds  
 Æolian magic from their lucid wombs:  
 Then old songs waken from enclouded tombs;  
 Old ditties sigh above their father’s grave;  
 Ghosts of melodious prophecyings rave  
 Round every spot where trod Apollo’s foot; 790  
 Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,  
 Where long ago a giant battle was;  
 And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass  
 In every place where infant Orpheus slept.  
 Feel we these things?—that moment have we stept  
 Into a sort of oneness, and our state  
 Is like a floating spirit’s. But there are  
 Richer entanglements, enthrallments far  
 More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,  
 To the chief intensity: the crown of these 800  
 Is made of love and friendship, and sits high  
 Upon the forehead of humanity.  
 All its more ponderous and bulky worth  
 Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth  
 A steady splendour; but at the tip-top,  
 There hangs by unseen film, an orb’d drop  
 Of light, and that is love: its influence,  
 Thrown in our eyes, genders a novel sense,

At which we start and fret; till in the end,  
 Melting into its radiance, we blend, 810  
 Mingle, and so become a part of it,—  
 Nor with aught else can our souls interknit  
 So wingedly: when we combine therewith,  
 Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,  
 And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.  
 Aye, so delicious is the unsating food,  
 That men, who might have tower'd in the van  
 Of all the congregated world, to fan  
 And winnow from the coming step of time  
 All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime 820  
 Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,  
 Have been content to let occasion die,  
 Whilst they did sleep in love's elysium.  
 And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,  
 Than speak against this ardent listlessness:  
 For I have ever thought that it might bless  
 The world with benefits unknowingly;  
 As does the nightingale, upperched high,  
 And cloister'd among cool and bunched leaves—  
 She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives 830  
 How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.  
 Just so may love, although 'tis understood  
 The mere commingling of passionate breath,  
 Produce more than our searching witnesseth:  
 What I know not: but who, of men, can tell  
 That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell  
 To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,  
 The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,  
 The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,  
 The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones, 840  
 Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet  
 If human souls did never kiss and greet?

“Now, if this earthly love has power to make  
 Men's being mortal, immortal; to shake  
 Ambition from their memories, and brim  
 Their measure of content: what merest whim,  
 Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,  
 To one, who keeps within his stedfast aim  
 A love immortal, an immortal too.  
 Look not so wilder'd; for these things are true, 850  
 And never can be born of atomies  
 That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,  
 Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I'm sure,  
 My restless spirit never could endure

To breed so long upon one luxury,  
 Unless it did, though fearfully, espy  
 A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.  
 My sayings will the less obscured seem,  
 When I have told thee how my waking sight  
 Has made me scruple whether that same night 860  
 Was pass'd in dreaming. Hearken, sweet Peona!  
 Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,  
 Which we should see but for these darkening boughs,  
 Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged brows  
 Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart  
 And meet so nearly, that with wings outtraught,  
 And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide  
 Past them, but he must brush on every side.  
 Some moulder'd steps lead into this cool cell,  
 Far as the slabbed margin of a well, 870  
 Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye  
 Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.  
 Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their stalks set  
 Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet  
 Edges them round, and they have golden pits:  
 'Twas there I got them, from the gaps and slits  
 In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my seat,  
 When all above was faint with mid-day heat.  
 And there in strife no burning thoughts to heed,  
 I'd bubble up the water through a reed; 880  
 So reaching back to boy-hood: make me ships  
 Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder chips,  
 With leaves stuck in them; and the Neptune be  
 Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily,  
 When love-lorn hours had left me less a child,  
 I sat contemplating the figures wild  
 Of o'er-head clouds melting the mirror through.  
 Upon a day, while thus I watch'd, by flew  
 A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver;  
 So plainly character'd, no breeze would shiver 890  
 The happy chance: so happy, I was fain  
 To follow it upon the open plain,  
 And, therefore, was just going; when, behold!  
 A wonder, fair as any I have told—  
 The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,  
 Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap  
 Through the cool depth.—It moved as if to flee—  
 I started up, when lo! refreshfully,  
 There came upon my face in plenteous showers 899  
 Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and flowers,

Wrapping all objects from my smothered sight,  
 Bathing my spirit in a new delight.  
 Aye, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss  
 Alone preserved me from the drear abyss  
 Of death, for the fair form had gone again.  
 Pleasure is oft a visitant; but pain  
 Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth  
 On the deer's tender haunches: late, and loth,  
 'Tis scar'd away by slow returning pleasure.  
 How sickening, how dark the dreadful leisure 910  
 Of weary days, made deeper exquisite,  
 By a fore-knowledge of unslumbrous night!  
 Like sorrow came upon me, heavier still,  
 Than when I wander'd from the poppy hill:  
 And a whole age of lingering moments crept  
 Sluggishly by, ere more contentment swept  
 Away at once the deadly yellow spleen.  
 Yes, thrice have I this fair enchantment seen;  
 Once more been tortured with renewed life.  
 When last the wintry gusts gave over strife 920  
 With the conquering sun of spring, and left the skies  
 Warm and serene, but yet with moistened eyes  
 In pity of the shatter'd infant buds,—  
 That time thou didst adorn, with amber studs,  
 My hunting cap, because I laugh'd and smil'd,  
 Chatted with thee, and many days exil'd  
 All torment from my breast;—'twas even then,  
 Straying about, yet, coop'd up in the den  
 Of helpless discontent,—hurling my lance  
 From place to place, and following at chance, 930  
 At last, by hap, through some young trees it struck,  
 And, plashing among bedded pebbles, stuck  
 In the middle of a brook,—whose silver ramble  
 Down twenty little falls, through reeds and bramble,  
 Tracing along, it brought me to a cave,  
 Whence it ran brightly forth, and white did lave  
 The nether sides of mossy stones and rock,—  
 'Mong which it gurgled blythe adieus, to mock  
 Its own sweet grief at parting. Overhead, 939  
 Hung a lush screen of drooping weeds, and spread  
 Thick, as to curtain up some wood-nymph's home.  
 "Ah! impious mortal, whither do I roam?"  
 Said I, low voic'd: "Ah, whither! 'Tis the groat  
 "Of Proserpine, when Hell, obscure and hot,  
 "Doth her resign; and where her tender hands  
 "She dabbles, on the cool and sluicy sands:

"Or 'tis the cell of Echo, where she sits,  
 "And babbles thorough silence, till her wits  
 "Are gone in tender madness, and anon,  
 "Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone 950  
 "Of sadness. O that she would take my vows,  
 "And breathe them sighingly among the boughs,  
 "To sue her gentle ears for whose fair head,  
 "Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their bed,  
 "And weave them dyingly—send honey-whispers  
 "Round every leaf, that all those gentle lispers  
 "May sigh my love unto her pitying!  
 "O charitable Echo! hear, and sing  
 "This ditty to her!—tell her"—so I stay'd  
 My foolish tongue, and listening, half afraid, 960  
 Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,  
 And blushing for the freaks of melancholy.  
 Salt tears were coming, when I heard my name  
 Most fondly lipp'd, and then these accents came:  
 "Endymion! the cave is secreter  
 "Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall stir  
 "No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light noise  
 "Of thy combing hand, the while it travelling cloys  
 "And trembles through my labyrinthine hair."  
 At that oppress'd I hurried in.—Ah! where 970  
 Are those swift moments? Whither are they fled?  
 I'll smile no more, Peona; nor will wed  
 Sorrow the way to death; but patiently  
 Bear up against it: so farewell, sad sigh;  
 And come instead demurest meditation,  
 To occupy me wholly, and to fashion  
 My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink.  
 No more will I count over, link by link,  
 My chain of grief: no longer strive to find  
 A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind 980  
 Blustering about my ears: aye, thou shalt see,  
 Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be;  
 What a calm round of hours shall make my days.  
 There is a paly flame of hope that plays  
 Where'er I look: but yet, I'll say 'tis naught—  
 And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,  
 Already, a more healthy countenance?  
 By this the sun is setting; we may chance  
 Meet some of our near-dwellers with my car."

This said, he rose, faint-smiling like a star  
 Through autumn mists, and took Peona's hand:  
 They stept into the boat, and launch'd from land.

BOOK II

O SOVEREIGN power of love! O grief! O balm!  
 All records, saving thine, come cool, and calm,  
 And shadowy, through the mist of passed years:  
 For others, good or bad, hatred and tears  
 Have become indolent; but touching thine,  
 One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth pine,  
 One kiss brings honey-dew from buried days.  
 The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,  
 Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,  
 Struggling, and blood, and shrieks—all dimly fades  
 Into some backward corner of the brain; 11  
 Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain  
 The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.  
 Hence, pageant history! hence, gilded cheat!  
 Swart planet in the universe of deeds!  
 Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds  
 Along the pebbled shore of memory!  
 Many old rotten-timber'd boats there be  
 Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified  
 To goodly vessels; many a sail of pride, 20  
 And golden keel'd, is left unlaunch'd and dry.  
 But wherefore this? What care, though owl did fly  
 About the great Athenian admiral's mast?  
 What care, though striding Alexander past  
 The Indus with his Macedonian numbers?  
 Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers  
 The glutt'd Cyclops, what care?—Juliet leaning  
 Amid her window-flowers,—sighing,—weaning  
 Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,  
 Doth more avail than these: the silver flow 30  
 Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,  
 Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,  
 Are things to brood on with more ardency  
 Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully  
 Must such conviction come upon his head,  
 Who, thus far, discontent, has dared to tread,  
 Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,  
 The path of love and poesy. But rest,  
 In chaffing restlessness, is yet more drear  
 Than to be crush'd, in striving to uprear 40  
 Love's standard on the battlements of song.  
 So once more days and nights aid me along,  
 Like legion'd soldiers.

Brain-sick shepherd prince,  
 What promise hast thou faithful guarded since  
 The day of sacrifice? Or, have new sorrows  
 Come with the constant dawn upon thy morrows?  
 Alas! 'tis his old grief. For many days,  
 Has he been wandering in uncertain ways:  
 Through wilderness, and woods of mossed oaks;  
 Counting his woe-worn minutes, by the strokes 50  
 Of the lone woodcutter; and listening still,  
 Hour after hour, to each lush-leav'd rill.  
 Now he is sitting by a shady spring,  
 And elbow-deep with feverous fingering  
 Stems the upbursting cold: a wild rose tree  
 Pavillions him in bloom, and he doth see  
 A bud which snares his fancy: lo! but now  
 He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water: how!  
 It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his sight;  
 And, in the middle, there is softly pight 60  
 A golden butterfly; upon whose wings  
 There must be surely character'd strange things,  
 For with wide eye he wonders, and smiles oft.

Lightly this little nerald flew aloft,  
 Follow'd by glad Endymion's clasped hands:  
 Onward it flies. From languor's sullen bands  
 His limbs are loos'd, and eager, on he hies  
 Dazzled to trace it in the sunny skies.  
 It seem'd he flew, the way so easy was; .  
 And like a new-born spirit did he pass 70  
 Through the green evening quiet in the sun,  
 O'er many a heath, through many a woodland dun,  
 Through buried paths, where sleepy twilight dreams  
 The summer time away. One track unseams  
 A wooded cleft, and, far away, the blue  
 Of ocean fades upon him; then, anew,  
 He sinks adown a solitary glen,  
 Where there was never sound of mortal men,  
 Saving, perhaps, some snow-light cadences  
 Melting to silence, when upon the breeze 80  
 Some holy bark let forth an anthem sweet,  
 To cheer itself to Delphi. Still his feet  
 Went swift beneath the merry-winged guide,  
 Until it reach'd a splashing fountain's side  
 That, near a cavern's mouth, for ever pour'd  
 Unto the temperate air: then high it soar'd,  
 And, downward, suddenly began to dip,  
 As if, athirst with so much toil, 'twould sip



The crystal spout-head: so it did, with touch  
 Most delicate, as though afraid to smutch 90  
 Even with mealy gold the waters clear.  
 But, at that very touch, to disappear  
 So fairy-quick, was strange! Bewildered,  
 Endymion sought around, and shook each bed  
 Of covert flowers in vain; and then he flung  
 Himself along the grass. What gentle tongue,  
 What whisperer disturb'd his gloomy rest?  
 It was a nymph uprisen to the breast  
 In the fountain's pebbly margin, and she stood  
 'Mong lillies, like the youngest of the brood. 100  
 To him her dripping hand she softly kist,  
 And anxiously began to plait and twist  
 Her ringlets round her fingers, saying: "Youth!  
 Too long, alas, hast thou starv'd on the ruth,  
 The bitterness of love: too long indeed,  
 Seeing thou art so gentle. Could I weed  
 Thy soul of care, by heavens, I would offer  
 All the bright riches of my crystal coffer  
 To Amphitrite; all my clear-eyed fish,  
 Golden, or rainbow-sided, or purplish, 110  
 Vermilion-tail'd, or finn'd with silvery gauze;  
 Yea, or my veined pebble-floor, that draws  
 A virgin light to the deep; my grotto-sands  
 Tawny and gold, ooz'd slowly from far lands  
 By my diligent springs; my level lillies, shells,  
 My charming rod, my potent river spells;  
 Yes, every thing, even to the pearly cup  
 Meander gave me,—for I bubbled up  
 To fainting creatures in a desert wild.  
 But woe is me, I am but as a child 120  
 To gladden thee; and all I dare to say,  
 Is, that I pity thee; that on this day  
 I've been thy guide; that thou must wander far  
 In other regions, past the scanty bar  
 To mortal steps, before thou can'st be ta'en  
 From every wasting sigh, from every pain,  
 Into the gentle bosom of thy love.  
 Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above:  
 But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewell!  
 I have a ditty for my hollow cell." 130

Hereat, she vanished from Endymion's gaze,  
 Who brooded o'er the water in amaze:  
 The dashing fount pour'd on, and where its pool  
 Lay, half asleep, in grass and rushes cool,

Quick waterflies and gnats were sporting still,  
 And fish were dimpling, as if good nor ill  
 Had fallen out that hour. The wanderer,  
 Holding his forehead, to keep off the burr  
 Of smothering fancies, patiently sat down;  
 And, while beneath the evening's sleepy frown 140  
 Glow-worms began to trim their starry lamps,  
 Thus breath'd he to himself: "Whoso encamps  
 To take a fancied city of delight,  
 O what a wretch is he! and when 'tis his,  
 After long toil and travelling, to miss  
 The kernel of his hopes, how more than vile:  
 Yet, for him there's refreshment even in toil;  
 Another city doth he set about,  
 Free from the smallest pebble-bead of doubt  
 That he will seize on trickling honey-combs: 150  
 Alas, he finds them dry; and then he foams,  
 And onward to another city speeds.  
 But this is human life: the war, the deeds,  
 The disappointment, the anxiety,  
 Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,  
 All human; bearing in themselves this good,  
 That they are still the air, the subtle food,  
 To make us feel existence, and to show  
 How quiet death is. Where soil is men grow,  
 Whether to weeds or flowers; but for me, 160  
 There is no depth to strike in: I can see  
 Naught earthly worth my compassing; so stand  
 Upon a misty, jutting head of land—  
 Alone? No, no; and by the Orphean lute,  
 When mad Eurydice is listening to't;  
 I'd rather stand upon this misty peak,  
 With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek,  
 But the soft shadow of my thrice-seen love,  
 Than be—I care not what. O meekest dove  
 Of heaven! O Cynthia, ten-times bright and fair!  
 From thy blue throne, now filling all the air, 171  
 Glance but one little beam of temper'd light  
 Into my bosom, that the dreadful might  
 And tyranny of love be somewhat scar'd!  
 Yet do not so, sweet queen; one torment spar'd.  
 Would give a pang to jealous misery,  
 Worse than the torment's self: but rather tie  
 Large wings upon my shoulders, and point out  
 My love's far dwelling. Though the playful rout  
 Of Cupids shun thee, too divine art thou, 180  
 Too keen in beauty, for thy silver prow

Not to have dipp'd in love's most gentle stream,  
 O be propitious, nor severely deem  
 My madness impious; for, by all the stars  
 That tend thy bidding, I do think the bars  
 That kept my spirit in are burst—that I  
 Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky!  
 How beautiful thou art! The world how deep!  
 How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep  
 Around their axle! Then these gleaming reins, 190  
 How lithe! When this thy chariot attains  
 Its airy goal, haply some bower veils  
 Those twilight eyes? Those eyes!—my spirit fails—  
 Dear goddess, help! or the wide-gaping air  
 Will gulph me—help!”—At this with madden'd stare,  
 And lifted hands, and trembling lips he stood;  
 Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,  
 Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.  
 And, but from the deep cavern there was borne  
 A voice, he had been froze to senseless stone; 200  
 Nor sigh of his, nor plaint, nor passion'd moan  
 Had more been heard. Thus swell'd it forth: “Descend,  
 Young mountaineer! descend where alleys bend  
 Into the sparry hollows of the world!  
 Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder hurl'd  
 As from thy threshold; day by day hast been  
 A little lower than the chilly sheen  
 Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms  
 Into the deadening ether that still charms  
 Their marble being: now, as deep profound 210  
 As those are high, descend! He ne'er is crown'd  
 With immortality, who fears to follow  
 Where airy voices lead: so through the hollow,  
 The silent mysteries of earth, descend!”

He heard but the last words, nor could contend  
 One moment in reflection: for he fled  
 Into the fearful deep, to hide his head  
 From the clear moon, the trees, and coming madness.

'Twas far too strange, and wonderful for sadness;  
 Sharpening, by degrees, his appetite 221  
 To dive into the deepest. Dark, nor light,  
 The region; nor bright, nor sombre wholly,  
 But mingled up; a gleaming melancholy;  
 A dusky empire and its diadems;  
 One faint eternal eventide of gems.

Aye, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,  
 Along whose track the prince quick footsteps told,  
 With all its lines abrupt and angular:  
 Out-shooting sometimes, like a meteor-star,  
 Through a vast antre; then the metal woof, 230  
 Like Vulcan's rainbow, with some monstrous roof  
 Curves hugely: now, far in the deep abyss,  
 It seems an angry lightning, and doth hiss  
 Fancy into belief: anon it leads  
 Through winding passages, where sameness breeds  
 Vexing conceptions of some sudden change;  
 Whether to silver grots, or giant range  
 Of sapphire columns, or fantastic bridge  
 Athwart a flood of crystal. On a ridge  
 Now fareth he, that o'er the vast beneath 240  
 Towers like an ocean-cliff, and whence he seeth  
 A hundred waterfalls, whose voices come  
 But as the murmuring surge. Chilly and numb  
 His bosom grew, when first he, far away  
 Descried an orb'd diamond, set to fray  
 Old darkness from his throne: 'twas like the sun  
 Uprisen o'er chaos: and with such a stun  
 Came the amazement, that, absorb'd in it,  
 He saw not fiercer wonders—past the wit  
 Of any spirit to tell, but one of those 250  
 Who, when this planet's sphering time doth close,  
 Will be its high remembrancers: who they?  
 The mighty ones who have made eternal day  
 For Greece and England. While astonishment  
 With deep-drawn sighs was quieting, he went  
 Into a marble gallery, passing through  
 A mimic temple, so complete and true  
 In sacred custom, that he well nigh fear'd  
 To search it inwards; whence far off appear'd,  
 Through a long pillar'd vista, a fair shrine, 260  
 And just beyond, on light tiptoe divine,  
 A quiver'd Dian. Stepping awfully,  
 The youth approach'd; oft turning his veil'd eye  
 Down sidelong aisles, and into niches old.  
 And when, more near against the marble coïd  
 He had touch'd his forehead, he began to thread  
 All courts and passages, where silence dead  
 Rous'd by his whispering footsteps murmured faint:  
 And long he travers'd to and fro, to acquaint  
 Himself with every mystery, and awe; 270  
 Till, weary, he sat down before the maw

Of a wide outlet, fathomless and dim, •  
 To wild uncertainty and shadows grim.  
 There, when new wonders ceas'd to float before,  
 And thoughts of self came on, how crude and sore  
 The journey homeward to habitual self!  
 A mad-pursuing of the fog-born elf,  
 Whose flitting lantern, through rude nettle-briar,  
 Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,  
 Into the bosom of a hated thing.

280

What misery most drowningly doth sing  
 In lone Endymion's ear, now he has raught  
 The goal of consciousness? Ah, 'tis the thought,  
 The deadly feel of solitude: for lo!  
 He cannot see the heavens, nor the flow  
 Of rivers, nor hill-flowers running wild  
 In pink and purple chequer, nor, up-pil'd,  
 The cloudy rack slow journeying in the west,  
 Like herded elephants; nor felt, nor prest  
 Cool grass, nor tasted the fresh slumberous air;  
 But far from such companionship to wear  
 An unknown time, surcharg'd with grief, away,  
 Was now his lot. And must he patient stay,  
 Tracing fantastic figures with his spear?  
 "No!" exclaim'd he, "why should I tarry here?"  
 No! loudly echoed times innumerable.

290

At which he straightway started, and 'gan tell  
 His paces back into the temple's chief;  
 Warming and glowing strong in the belief  
 Of help from Dian: so that when again  
 He caught her airy form, thus did he plain,  
 Moving more near the while: "O Haunter chaste  
 Of river sides, and woods, and heathy waste,  
 Where with thy silver bow and arrows keen  
 Art thou now forested? O woodland Queen,  
 What smoothest air thy smoother forehead woos?  
 Where dost thou listen to the wide halloos  
 Of thy disparted nymphs? Through what dark tree  
 Glimmers thy crescent? Wheresoe'er it be,  
 'Tis in the breath of heaven: thou dost taste  
 Freedom as none can taste it, nor dost waste  
 Thy loveliness in dismal elements;  
 But, finding in our green earth sweet contents,  
 There livest blissfully. Ah, if to thee  
 It feels Elysian, how rich to me,  
 An exil'd mortal, sounds its pleasant name!  
 Within my breast there lives a choking flame—

300

310

O let me tool't the zephyr-boughs among!  
 A homeward fever parches up my tongue—  
 O let me slake it at the running springs! 320  
 Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings—  
 O let me once more hear the linnet's note!  
 Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float—  
 O let me 'noint them with the heaven's light!  
 Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white?  
 O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice!  
 Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-juice?  
 O think how this dry palate would rejoice!  
 If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,  
 O think how I should love a bed of flowers!— 330  
 Young goddess! let me see my native bowers!  
 Deliver me from this rapacious deep!"

Thus ending loudly, as he would o'erleap  
 His destiny, alert he stood: but when  
 Obstinate silence came heavily again,  
 Feeling about for its old couch of space  
 And airy cradle, lowly bow'd his face  
 Desponding, o'er the marble floor's cold thrill.  
 But 'twas not long; for, sweeter than the rill  
 To its old channel, or a swollen tide 340  
 To margin shallows, were the leaves he spied,  
 And flowers, and wreaths, and ready myrtle crowns  
 Up heaping through the slab: refreshment drowns  
 Itself, and strives its own delights to hide—  
 Nor in one spot alone; the floral pride  
 In a long whispering birth enchanted grew  
 Before his footsteps; as when heav'd anew  
 Old ocean rolls a lengthened wave to the shore,  
 Down whose green back the short-liv'd foam, all hoar,  
 Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence. 350

Increasing still in heart, and pleasant sense,  
 Upon his fairy journey on he hastes;  
 So anxious for the end, he scarcely wastes  
 One moment with his hand among the sweets:  
 Onward he goes—he stops—his bosom beats  
 As plainly in his ear, as the faint charm  
 Of which the throbs were born. This still alarm,  
 This sleepy music, forc'd him walk tiptoe:  
 For it came more softly than the east could blow  
 Arion's magic to the Atlantic isles; 360  
 Or than the west, made jealous by the smiles

Of thron'd Apollo, could breathe back the lyre  
To seas Ionian and Tyrian.

O did he ever live, that lonely man,  
Who lov'd—and music slew not? 'Tis the pest  
Of love, that fairest joys give most unrest;  
That things of delicate and tenderest worth  
Are swallow'd all, and made a seared dearth,  
By one consuming flame: it doth immerse  
And suffocate true blessings in a curse.  
Half-happy, by comparison of bliss,  
Is miserable. 'Twas even so with this  
Dew-dropping melody, in the Carian's ear;  
First heaven, then hell, and then forgotten clear,  
Vanish'd in elemental passion.

370

And down some swart abysm he had gone,  
Had not a heavenly guide benignant led  
To where thick myrtle branches, 'gainst his head  
Brushing, awakened: then the sounds again  
Went noiseless as a passing noontide rain  
Over a bower, where little space he stood;  
For as the sunset peeps into a wood  
So saw he panting light, and towards it went  
Through winding alleys; and lo, wonderment!  
Upon soft verdure saw, one here, one there,  
Cupids a slumbering on their pinions fair.

380

After a thousand mazes overgone,  
At last, with sudden step, he came upon  
A chamber, myrtle wall'd, embowered high,  
Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy,  
And more of beautiful and strange beside:  
For on a silken couch of rosy pride,  
In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth  
Of fondest beauty; fonder, in fair sooth,  
Than sighs could fathom, or contentment reach:  
And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach,  
Or ripe October's faded marigolds,  
Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds—  
Not hiding up an Apollonian curve  
Of neck and shoulder, nor the tenting swerve  
Of knee from knee, nor ankles pointing light;  
But rather, giving them to the filled sight  
Officially. Sideway his face repos'd  
On one white arm, and tenderly unclos'd,

390

400

By tenderest pressure, a faint damask mouth  
 To slumb'ry pout; just as the morning south  
 Disparts a dew-lipp'd rose. Above his head,  
 Four lilly stalks did their white honours wed  
 To make a coronal; and round him grew  
 All tendrils green, of every bloom and hue, 410  
 Together interwin'd and trammell'd fresh:  
 The vine of glossy sprout; the ivy mesh,  
 Shading its Ethiop berries; and woodbine,  
 Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine;  
 Convolvulus in streaked vases flush;  
 The creeper, mellowing for an autumn blush;  
 And virgin's bower, trailing airily;  
 With others of the sisterhood. Hard by,  
 Stood serene Cupids watching silently.  
 One, kneeling to a lyre, touch'd the strings, 420  
 Muffling to death the pathos with his wings;  
 And, ever and anon, uprose to look  
 At the youth's slumber; while another took  
 A willow-bough, distilling odorous dew,  
 And shook it on his hair; another flew  
 In through the woven roof, and fluttering-wise  
 Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

At these enchantments, and yet many more,  
 The breathless Latmian wonder'd o'er and o'er;  
 Until, impatient in embarrassment, 430  
 He forthright pass'd, and lightly treading went  
 To that same feather'd lyrist, who straightway,  
 Smiling, thus whisper'd: "Though from upper day  
 Thou art a wanderer, and thy presence here  
 Might seem unholy, be of happy cheer!  
 For 'tis the nicest touch of human honour,  
 When some ethereal and high-favouring donor  
 Presents immortal bowers to mortal sense;  
 As now 'tis done to thee, Endymion. Hence  
 Was I in no wise startled. So recline 440  
 Upon these living flowers. Here is wine,  
 Alive with sparkles—never, I aver,  
 Since Ariadne was a vintager,  
 So cool a purple: taste these juicy pears,  
 Sent me by sad Vertumnus, when his fears  
 Were high about Pomona: here is cream,  
 Deepening to richness from a snowy gleam;  
 Sweeter than that nurse Amalthea skimm'd  
 For the boy Jupiter: and here, undimm'd



By any touch, a bunch of blooming plums  
 Ready to melt between an infant's gums: 450  
 And here is manna pick'd from Syrian trees,  
 In starlight, by the three Hesperides.  
 Feast on, and meanwhile I will let thee know  
 Of all these things around us." He did so,  
 Still brooding o'er the cadence of his lyre;  
 And thus: "I need not any hearing tire  
 By telling how the sea-born goddess pin'd  
 For a mortal youth, and how she strove to bind  
 Him all in all unto her doting self, 460  
 Who would not be so prison'd? but, fond elf,  
 He was content to let her amorous plea  
 Faint through his careless arms; content to see  
 An unseiz'd heaven dying at his feet;  
 Content, O fool! to make a cold retreat,  
 When on the pleasant grass such love, lovelorn,  
 Lay sorrowing; when every tear was born  
 Of diverse passion; when her lips and eyes  
 Were clos'd in sullen moisture, and quick sighs  
 Came vex'd and pettish through her nostrils small.  
 Hush! no exclaim—yet, justly mightst thou call  
 Curses upon his head.—I was half glad 472  
 But my poor mistress went distract and mad,  
 When the boar tusk'd him: so away she flew  
 To Jove's high throne, and by her plainings drew  
 Immortal tear-drops down the thunderer's beard;  
 Whereon, it was decreed he should be rear'd  
 Each summer time to life. Lo! this is he,  
 That same Adonis, safe in the privacy  
 Of this still region all his winter-sleep. 480  
 Aye, sleep; for when our love-sick queen did weep  
 Over his waned corse, the tremulous shower  
 Heal'd up the wound, and, with a balmy power,  
 Medicin'd death to a lengthened drowsiness:  
 The which she fills with visions, and doth dress  
 In all this quiet luxury; and hath set  
 Us young immortals, without any let,  
 To watch his slumber through. 'Tis well nigh pass'd,  
 Even to a moment's filling up, and fast  
 She scuds with summer breezes, to pant through 490  
 The first long kiss, warm firstling, to renew  
 Embower'd sports in Cytherea's isle.  
 Look! how those winged listeners all this while  
 Stand anxious: see! behold!"—This clamant word  
 Broke through the careful silence; for they heard

A rustling noise of leaves, and out there flutter'd  
 Pigeons and doves: Adonis something mutter'd  
 The while one hand, that erst upon his thigh  
 Lay dormant, mov'd convuls'd and gradually  
 Up to his forehead. Then there was a hum 500  
 Of sudden voices, echoing, "Come! come!  
 Arise! awake! Clear summer has forth walk'd  
 Unto the clover-sward, and she has talk'd  
 Full soothingly to every nested finch:  
 Rise, Cupids! or we'll give the blue-bell pinch  
 To your dimpled arms. Once more sweet life begin!"  
 At this, from every side they hurried in,  
 Rubbing their sleepy eyes with lazy wrists,  
 And doubling over head their little fists  
 In backward yawns. But all were soon alive: 510  
 For as delicious wine doth, sparkling, dive  
 In nectar'd clouds and curls through water fair,  
 So from the arbour roof down swell'd an air  
 Odorous and enlivening; making all  
 To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call  
 For their sweet queen: when lo! the wreathed green  
 Disparted, and far upward could be seen  
 Blue heaven, and a silver car, air-borne,  
 Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn,  
 Spun off a drizzling dew,—which falling chill 520  
 On soft Adonis' shoulders, made him still  
 Nestle and turn uneasily about.  
 Soon were the white doves plain, with neck stretch'd out,  
 And silken traces lighten'd in descent;  
 And soon, returning from love's banishment,  
 Queen Venus leaning downward open arm'd:  
 Her shadow fell upon his breast, and charm'd  
 A tumult to his heart, and a new life  
 Into his eyes. Ah, miserable strife,  
 But for her comforting! unhappy sight, 530  
 But meeting her blue orbs! Who, who can write  
 Of these first minutes? The unchariest muse  
 To embracements warm as theirs makes coy excuse.

O it has ruffled every spirit there,  
 Saving Love's self, who stands superb to share  
 The general gladness: awfully he stands;  
 A sovereign quell is in his waving hands;  
 No sight can bear the lightning of his bow;  
 His quiver is mysterious, none can know 539  
 What themselves think of it; from forth his eyes  
 There darts strange light of varied hues and dies:

A scowl is sometimes on his brow, but who  
 Look full upon it feel anon the blue  
 Of his fair eyes run liquid through their souls.  
 Endymion feels it, and no more controls  
 The burning prayer within him; so, bent low,  
 He had begun a plaining of his woe.  
 But Venus, bending forward, said: "My child,  
 Favour this gentle youth; his days are wild  
 With love—he—but alas! too well I see 550  
 Thou know'st the deepness of his misery.  
 Ah, smile not so, my son: I tell thee true,  
 That when through heavy hours I used to rue  
 The endless sleep of this new-born Adon',  
 This stranger aye I pitied. For upon  
 A dreary morning once I fled away  
 Into the breezy clouds, to weep and pray  
 For this my love: for vexing Mars had teas'd  
 Me even to tears: thence, when a little eas'd,  
 Down-looking, vacant, through a hazy wood, 560  
 I saw this youth as he despairing stood:  
 Those same dark curls blown vagrant in the wind;  
 Those same full fringed lids a constant blind  
 Over his sullen eyes: I saw him throw  
 Himself on wither'd leaves, even as though  
 Death had come sudden; for no jot he mov'd,  
 Yet mutter'd wildly. I could hear he lov'd  
 Some fair immortal, and that his embrace  
 Had zoned her through the night. There is no trace  
 Of this in heaven: I have mark'd each cheek, 570  
 And find it is the vainest thing to seek;  
 And that of all things 'tis kept secretest.  
 Endymion! one day thou wilt be blest:  
 So still obey the guiding hand that fends  
 Thee safely through these wonders for sweet ends.  
 'Tis a concealment needful in extreme;  
 And if I guess'd not so, the sunny beam  
 Thou shouldst mount up to with me. Now adieu!  
 Here must we leave thee."—At these words upflew  
 The impatient doves, uprose the floating car, 580  
 Up went the hum celestial. High afar  
 The Latmian saw them minish into naught;  
 And, when all were clear vanish'd, still he caught  
 A vivid lightning from that dreadful bow.  
 When all was darkened, with Ætnean throes  
 The earth clos'd—gave a solitary moan—  
 And left him once again in twilight lone.

He did not rave, he did not stare aghast,  
 For all those visions were o'ergone, and past,  
 And he in loneliness: he felt assur'd 590  
 Of happy times, when all he had endur'd  
 Would seem a feather to the mighty prize.  
 So, with unusual gladness, on he hies  
 Through caves, and palaces of mottled ore,  
 Gold dome, and crystal wall, and turquoise floor,  
 Black polish'd porticos of awful shade,  
 And, at the last, a diamond balustrade,  
 Leading afar past wild magnificence,  
 Spiral through ruggedest loopholes, and thence  
 Stretching across a void, then guiding o'er 600  
 Enormous chasms, where, all foam and roar,  
 Streams subterranean tease their granite beds;  
 Then heighten'd just above the silvery heads  
 Of a thousand fountains, so that he could dash  
 The waters with his spear; but at the splash,  
 Done heedlessly, those spouting columns rose  
 Sudden a poplar's height, and 'gan to enclose  
 His diamond path with fretwork, streaming round  
 Alive, and dazzling cool, and with a sound,  
 Haply, like dolphin tumults, when sweet shells 610  
 Welcome the float of Thetis. Long he dwells  
 On this delight; for, every minute's space,  
 The streams with changed magic interlace:  
 Sometimes like delicatest lattices,  
 Cover'd with crystal vines; then weeping trees.  
 Moving about as in a gentle wind,  
 Which, in a wink, to watery gauze refin'd,  
 Pour'd into shapes of curtain'd canopies,  
 Spangled, and rich with liquid broideries  
 Of flowers, peacocks, swans, and naiads fair. 620  
 Swifter than lightning went these wonders rare;  
 And then the water, into stubborn streams  
 Collecting, mimick'd the wrought oaken beams,  
 Pillars, and frieze, and high fantastic roof,  
 Of those dusk places in times far aloof  
 Cathedrals call'd. He bade a loth farewell  
 To these founts Protean, passing gulph, and dell,  
 And torrent, and ten thousand jutting shapes,  
 Half seen through deepest gloom, and grisly gapes,  
 Blackening on every side, and overhead 630  
 A vaulted dome like Heaven's, far bespread  
 With starlight gems: aye, all so huge and strange,  
 The solitary felt a hurried change

Working within him into something dreary,—  
 Vex'd like a morning eagle, lost, and weary,  
 And purblind amid foggy, midnight wolds.  
 But he revives at once: for who beholds  
 New sudden things, nor casts his mental slough?  
 Forth from a rugged arch, in the dusk below,  
 Came mother Cybele! alone—alone—  
 In sombre chariot; dark foldings thrown  
 About her majesty, and front death-pale,  
 With turrets crown'd. Four maned lions hale  
 The sluggish wheels; solemn their toothed maws,  
 Their surly eyes brow-hidden, heavy paws  
 Uplifted drowsily, and nervy tails  
 Cowering their tawny brushes. Silent sails  
 This shadowy queen athwart, and faints away  
 In another gloomy arch.

640

Wherefore delay,  
 Young traveller, in such a mournful place?  
 Art thou wayworn, or canst not further trace  
 The diamond path? And does it indeed end  
 Abrupt in middle air? Yet earthward bend  
 Thy forehead, and to Jupiter cloud-borne  
 Call ardently! He was indeed wayworn;  
 Abrupt, in middle air, his way was lost;  
 To cloud-borne Jove he bowed, and there crost  
 Towards him a large eagle, 'twixt whose wings,  
 Without one impious word, himself he flings,  
 Committed to the darkness and the gloom:  
 Down, down, uncertain to what pleasant doom,  
 Swift as a fathoming plummet down he fell  
 Through unknown things; till exhaled asphodel,  
 And rose, with spicy fannings interbreath'd,  
 Came swelling forth where little caves were wreath'd  
 So thick with leaves and mosses, that they seem'd  
 Large honeycombs of green, and freshly teem'd  
 With airs delicious. In the greenest nook  
 The eagle landed him, and farewell took.

650

660

It was a jasmine bower, all bestrown  
 With golden moss. His every sense had grown  
 Ethereal for pleasure; 'bove his head  
 Flew a delight half-graspable; his tread  
 Was Hesperean; to his capable ears  
 Silence was music from the holy spheres;  
 A dewy luxury was in his eyes;  
 The little flowers felt his pleasant sighs

670

And stirr'd them faintly. Verdant cave and cell  
 He wander'd through, oft wondering at such swell  
 Of sudden exaltation: but, "Alas!" 680  
 Said he, "will all this gush of feeling pass  
 Away in solitude? And must they wane,  
 Like melodies upon a sandy plain,  
 Without an echo? Then shall I be left  
 So sad, so melancholy, so bereft!  
 Yet still I feel immortal! O my love,  
 My breath of life, where art thou? High above,  
 Dancing before the morning gates of heaven?  
 Or keeping watch among those starry seven,  
 Old Atlas' children? Art a maid of the waters, 690  
 One of shell-winding Triton's bright-hair'd daughters?  
 Or art, impossible! a nymph of Dian's,  
 Weaving a coronal of tender scions  
 For very idleness? Where'er thou art,  
 Methinks it now is at my will to start  
 Into thine arms; to scare Aurora's train,  
 And snatch thee from the morning; o'er the main  
 To scud like a wild bird, and take thee off  
 From thy sea-foamy cradle; or to doff  
 Thy shepherd vest, and woo thee mid fresh leaves. 700  
 No, no, too eagerly my soul deceives  
 Its powerless self: I know this cannot be.  
 O let me then by some sweet dreaming flee  
 To her entrancements: hither sleep awhile!  
 Hither most gentle sleep! and soothing foil  
 For some few hours the coming solitude."

Thus spake he, and that moment felt endued  
 With power to dream deliciously; so wound  
 Through a dim passage, searching till he found  
 The smoothest mossy bed and deepest, where 710  
 He threw himself, and just into the air  
 Stretching his indolent arms, he took, O bliss!  
 A naked waist: "Fair Cupid, whence is this?"  
 A well-known voice sigh'd, "Sweetest, here am I!"  
 At which soft ravishment, with dotting cry  
 They trembled to each other.—Helicon!  
 O fountain'd hill! Old Homer's Helicon!  
 That thou wouldst spout a little streamlet o'er  
 These sorry pages; then the verse would soar  
 And sing above this gentle pair, like lark 720  
 Over his nested young: but all is dark  
 Around thine aged top, and thy clear fount  
 Exhales in mists to heaven. Aye, the count

Of mighty Poets is made up; the scroll  
 Is folded by the Muses; the bright roll  
 Is in Apollo's hand: our dazed eyes  
 Have seen a new tinge in the western skies:  
 The world has done its duty. Yet, oh yet,  
 Although the sun of poesy is set,  
 These lovers did embrace, and we must weep 730  
 That there is no old power left to steep  
 A quill immortal in their joyous tears.  
 Long time ere silence did their anxious fears  
 Question that thus it was; long time they lay  
 Fondling and kissing every doubt away;  
 Long time ere soft caressing sobs began  
 To mellow into words, and then there ran  
 Two bubbling springs of talk from their sweet lips.  
 "O known Unknown! from whom my being sips 740  
 Such darling essence, wherefore may I not  
 Be ever in these arms? in this sweet spot  
 Pillow my chin for ever? ever press  
 These toying hands and kiss their smooth excess?  
 Why not for ever and for ever feel  
 That breath about my eyes? Ah, thou wilt steal  
 Away from me again, indeed, indeed—  
 Thou wilt be gone away, and wilt not heed  
 My lonely madness. Speak, delicious fair!  
 Is—is it to be so? No! Who will dare 750  
 To pluck thee from me? And, of thine own will,  
 Full well I feel thou wouldst not leave me. Still  
 Let me entwine thee surer, surer—now  
 How can we part? Elysium! who art thou?  
 Who, that thou canst not be for ever here,  
 Or lift me with thee to some starry sphere?  
 Enchantress! tell me by this soft embrace,  
 By the most soft completion of thy face,  
 Those lips, O slippery blisses, twinkling eyes,  
 And by these tenderest, milky sovereignties—  
 These tenderest, and by the nectar-wine, 760  
 The passion"———"O dov'd Ida the divine!  
 Endymion! dearest! Ah, unhappy me!  
 His soul will 'scape us—O felicity!  
 How he does love me! His poor temples beat  
 To the very tune of love—how sweet, sweet, sweet.  
 Revive, dear youth, or I shall faint and die;  
 Revive, or these soft hours will hurry by  
 In tranced dulness; speak, and let that spell  
 Affright this lethargy! I cannot quell

Its heavy pressure, and will press at least 770  
 My lips to thine, that they may richly feast  
 Until we taste the life of love again.  
 What! dost thou move? dost kiss? O bliss! O pain!  
 I love thee, youth, more than I can conceive;  
 And so long absence from thee doth bereave  
 My soul of any rest: yet must I hence:  
 Yet, can I not to starry eminence  
 Uplift thee; nor for very shame can own  
 Myself to thee: Ah, dearest, do not groan  
 Or thou wilt force me from this secrecy, 780  
 And I must blush in heaven. O that I  
 Had done 't already; that the dreadful smiles  
 At my lost brightness, my impassion'd wiles,  
 Had waned from Olympus' solemn height,  
 And from all serious Gods; that our delight  
 Was quite forgotten, save of us alone!  
 And wherefore so ashamed? 'Tis but to atone  
 For endless pleasure, by some coward blushes:  
 Yet must I be a coward!—Horror rushes  
 Too palpable before me—the sad look 790  
 Of Jove—Minerva's start—no bosom shook  
 With awe of purity—no Cupid pinion  
 In reverence veiled—my crystalline dominion  
 Half lost, and all old hymns made nullity!  
 But what is this to love? O I could fly  
 With thee into the ken of heavenly powers,  
 So thou wouldst thus, for many sequent hours,  
 Press me so sweetly. Now I swear at once  
 That I am wise, that Pallas is a dunce—  
 Perhaps her love like mine is but unknown— 800  
 O I do think that I have been alone  
 In chastity: yes, Pallas has been sighing,  
 While every eve saw me my hair uptying  
 With fingers cool as aspen leaves. Sweet love,  
 I was as vague as solitary dove,  
 Nor knew that nests were built. Now a soft kiss—  
 Aye, by that kiss, I vow an endless bliss,  
 An immortality of passion's thine:  
 Ere long I will exalt thee to the shine  
 Of heaven ambrosial; and we will shade 810  
 Ourselves whole summers by a river glade;  
 And I will tell thee stories of the sky,  
 And breathe thee whispers of its minstrelsy.  
 My happy love will overwing all bounds!  
 O let me melt into thee; let the sounds



Of our close voices marry at their birth;  
 Let us entwine hoveringly—O dearth  
 Of human words! roughness of mortal speech!  
 Lispings empyrean will I sometime teach  
 Thine honied tongue—lute-breathings, which I gasp 821  
 To have thee understand, now while I clasp  
 Thee thus, and weep for fondness—I am pain'd,  
 Endymion: woe! woe! is grief contain'd  
 In the very deeps of pleasure, my sole life?"—  
 Hereat, with many sobs, her gentle strife  
 Melted into a languor. He return'd  
 Entranced vows and tears.

Ye who have yearn'd

With too much passion, will here stay and pity,  
 For the mere sake of truth; as 'tis a ditty  
 Not of these days, but long ago 'twas told 830  
 By a cavern wind unto a forest old;  
 And then the forest told it in a dream  
 To a sleeping lake, whose cool and level gleam  
 A poet caught as he was journeying  
 To Phœbus' shrine; and in it he did fling  
 His weary limbs, bathing an hour's space,  
 And after, straight in that inspired place  
 He sang the story up into the air,  
 Giving it universal freedom. There  
 Has it been ever sounding for those ears 840  
 Whose tips are glowing hot. The legend cheers  
 Yon sentinel stars; and he who listens to it  
 Must surely be self-doom'd or he will rue it:  
 For quenchless burnings come upon the heart,  
 Made fiercer by a fear lest any part  
 Should be engulfed in the eddying wind.  
 As much as here is penn'd doth always find  
 A resting place, thus much comes clear and plain;  
 Anon the strange voice is upon the wane—  
 And 'tis but echo'd from departing sound, 850  
 That the fair visitant at last unwound  
 Her gentle limbs, and left the youth asleep.—  
 Thus the tradition of the gusty deep.

Now turn we to our former chroniclers.—  
 Endymion awoke, that grief of hers  
 Sweet paining on his ear: he sickly guess'd  
 How lone he was once more, and sadly press'd  
 His empty arms together, hung his head,  
 And most forlorn upon that widow'd bed

Sat silently. Love's madness he had known: 860  
 Often with more than tortured lion's groan  
 Moanings had burst from him; but now that rage  
 Had pass'd away: no longer did he wage  
 A rough-voic'd war against the dooming stars.  
 No, he had felt too much for such harsh jars:  
 The lyre of his soul Æolian tun'd  
 Forgot all violence, and but commun'd  
 With melancholy thought: O he had swoon'd  
 Drunken from pleasure's nipple; and his love  
 Henceforth was dove-like.—Loth was he to move 870  
 From the imprinted couch, and when he did,  
 'Twas with slow, languid paces, and face hid  
 In muffing hands. So temper'd, out he stray'd  
 Half seeing visions that might have dismay'd  
 Alecto's serpents; ravishments more keen  
 Than Hermes' pipe, when anxious he did lean  
 Over eclipsing eyes: and at the last  
 It was a sounding grotto, vaulted, vast,  
 O'er studded with a thousand, thousand pearls,  
 And crimson mouthed shells with stubborn curls, 880  
 Of every shape and size, even to the bulk  
 In which whales arbour close, to brood and sulk  
 Against an endless storm. Moreover too,  
 Fish-semblances, of green and azure hue,  
 Ready to snort their streams. In this cool wonder  
 Endymion sat down, and 'gan to ponder  
 On all his life: his youth, up to the day  
 When 'mid acclaim, and feasts, and garlands gay,  
 He stept upon his shepherd throne: the look  
 Of his white palace in wild forest nook, 890  
 And all the revels he had lorded there:  
 Each tender maiden whom he once thought fair,  
 With every friend and fellow-woodlander—  
 Pass'd like a dream before him. Then the spur  
 Of the old bards to mighty deeds: his plans  
 To nurse the golden age 'mong shepherd clans:  
 That wondrous night: the great Pan-festival:  
 His sister's sorrow; and his wanderings all,  
 Until into the earth's deep maw he rush'd:  
 Then all its buried magic, till it flush'd 900  
 High with excessive love. "And now," thought he,  
 "How long must I remain in jeopardy  
 Of blank amazements that amaze no more?  
 Now I have tasted her sweet soul to the core  
 All other depths are shallow: essences,  
 Once spiritual, are like muddy lees,

Meant but to fertilize my earthly root,  
 And make my branches lift a golden fruit  
 Into the bloom of heaven: other light,  
 Though it be quick and sharp enough to blight 910  
 The Olympian eagle's vision, is dark,  
 Dark as the parentage of chaos. Hark!  
 My silent thoughts are echoing from these shells;  
 Or they are but the ghosts, the dying swells  
 Of noises far away?—list!"—Hereupon  
 He kept an anxious ear. The humming tone  
 Came louder, and behold, there as he lay,  
 On either side outgush'd, with misty spray,  
 A copious spring; and both together dash'd  
 Swift, mad, fantastic round the rocks, and lash'd 920  
 Among the conchs and shells of the lofty grot,  
 Leaving a trickling dew. At last they shot  
 Down from the ceiling's height, pouring a noise  
 As of some breathless racers whose hopes poize  
 Upon the last few steps, and with spent force  
 Along the ground they took a winding course.  
 Endymion follow'd—for it seem'd that one  
 Ever pursued, the other strove to shun—  
 Follow'd their languid mazes, till well nigh  
 He had left thinking of the mystery,— 930  
 And was now rapt in tender hoverings  
 Over the vanish'd bliss. Ah! what is it sings  
 His dream away? What melodies are these?  
 They sound as through the whispering of trees,  
 Not native in such barren vaults. Give ear!

"O Arethusa, peerless nymph! why fear  
 Such tenderness as mine? Great Dian, why,  
 Why didst thou hear her prayer? O that I  
 Were rippling round her dainty fairness now,  
 Circling about her waist, and striving how 940  
 To entice her to a dive! then stealing in  
 Between her luscious lips and eyelids thin.  
 O that her shining hair was in the sun,  
 And I distilling from it thence to run  
 In amorous rillets down her shrinking form!  
 To linger on her lilly shoulders, warm  
 Between her kissing breasts, and every charm  
 Touch raptur'd!—See how painfully I flow:  
 Fair maid, be pitiful to my great woe.  
 Stay, stay thy weary course, and let me lead, 950  
 A happy wooer, to the flowery mead

Where all that beauty snar'd me."—"Cruel god,  
 Desist! or my offended mistress' nod  
 Will stagnate all thy fountains:—tease me not  
 With syren words—Ah, have I really got  
 Such power to madden thee? And is it true—  
 Away, away, or I shall dearly rue  
 My very thoughts: in mercy then away,  
 Kindest Alpheus, for should I obey  
 My own dear will, 'twould be a deadly bane. 960  
 O, Oread-Queen! would that thou hadst a pain  
 Like this of mine, then would I fearless turn  
 And be a criminal. Alas, I burn,  
 I shudder—gentle river, get thee hence.  
 Alpheus! thou enchanter! every sense  
 Of mine was once made perfect in these woods.  
 Fresh breezes, bowery lawns, and innocent floods,  
 Ripe fruits, and lonely couch, contentment gave;  
 But ever since I heedlessly did lave  
 In thy deceitful stream, a panting glow 970  
 Grew strong within me: 'wherefore serve me so,  
 And call it love? Alas, 'twas cruelty.  
 Not once more did I close my happy eye  
 Amid the thrushes' song. Away! Avaunt!  
 O 'twas a cruel thing."—"Now thou dost taunt  
 So softly, Arethusa, that I think  
 If thou wast playing on my shady brink,  
 Thou wouldst bathe once again. Innocent maid!  
 Stifle thine heart no more; nor be afraid  
 Of angry powers: there are deities 980  
 Will shade us with their wings. Those fitful sighs  
 'Tis almost death to hear: O let me pour  
 A dewy balm upon them!—fear no more,  
 Sweet Arethusa! Dian's self must feel  
 Sometime these very pangs. Dear maiden, steal  
 Blushing into my soul, and let us fly  
 These dreary caverns for the open sky.  
 I will delight thee all my winding course,  
 From the green sea up to my hidden source  
 About Arcadian forests; and will show 990  
 The channels where my coolest waters flow  
 Through mossy rocks; where, 'mid exuberant green,  
 I roam in pleasant darkness, more unseen  
 Than Saturn in his exile; where I brim  
 Round flowery islands, and take thence a skim  
 Of mealy sweets, which myriads of bees  
 Buzz from their honey'd wings: and thou shouldst please

Thyself to choose the richest, where we might  
 Be incense-pillow'd every summer night.  
 Doff all sad fears, thou white deliciousness, 1000  
 And let us be thus comforted; unless  
 Thou couldst rejoice to see my hopeless stream  
 Hurry distracted from Sol's temperate beam,  
 And pour to death along some hungry sands."—  
 "What can I do, Alpheus? Dian stands  
 Severe before me: persecuting fate!  
 Unhappy Arethusa! thou wast late  
 A huntress free in"—At this, sudden fell  
 Those two sad streams adown a fearful dell.  
 The Latmian listen'd, but he heard no more, 1010  
 Save echo, faint repeating o'er and o'er  
 The name of Arethusa. On the verge  
 Of that dark gulph he wept, and said: "I urge  
 Thee, gentle Goddess of my pilgrimage,  
 By our eternal hopes, to soothe, to assuage,  
 If thou art powerful, these lovers' pains;  
 And make them happy in some happy plains."

He turn'd—there was a whelming sound—he slept,  
 There was a cooler light; and so he kept  
 Towards it by a sandy path, and lo! 1020  
 More suddenly than doth a moment go,  
 The visions of the earth were gone and fled—  
 He saw the giant sea above his head.

### BOOK III

THERE are who lord it o'er their fellow-men  
 With most prevailing tinsel: who unpen  
 Their baaing vanities, to browse away  
 The comfortable green and juicy hay  
 From human pastures; or, O torturing fact!  
 Who, through an idiot blink, will see unpack'd  
 Fire-branded foxes to sear up and singe  
 Our gold and ripe-ear'd hopes. With not one tinge  
 Of sanctuary splendour, not a sight  
 Able to face an owl's, they still are dight 16  
 By the blear-eyed nations in empurpled vests,  
 And crowns, and turbans. With unladen breasts,  
 Save of blown self-applause, they proudly mount  
 To their spirit's perch, their being's high account,  
 Their tiptop nothings, their dull skies, their thrones—  
 Amid the fierce intoxicating tones

Of trumpets, shoutings, and belabour'd drums,  
 And sudden cannon. Ah! how all this hums,  
 In wakeful ears, like uproar past and gone—  
 Like thunder clouds that spake to Babylon, 20  
 And set those old Chaldeans to their tasks.—  
 Are then regalities all gilded masks?  
 No, there are throned seats unscalable  
 But by a patient wing, a constant spell,  
 Or by ethereal things that, unconfin'd,  
 Can make a ladder of the eternal wind,  
 And poize about in cloudy thunder-tents  
 To watch the abysm-birth of elements.  
 Aye, 'bove the withering of old-lipp'd Fate  
 A thousand Powers keep religious state, 30  
 In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne;  
 And, silent as a consecrated urn,  
 Hold sphery sessions for a season due.  
 Yet few of these far majesties, ah, few!  
 Have bared their operations to this globe—  
 Few, who with gorgeous pageantry enrobe  
 Our piece of heaven—whose benevolence  
 Shakes hand with our own Ceres; every sense  
 Filling with spiritual sweets to plenitude,  
 As bees gorge full their cells. And, by the feud 40  
 'Twixt Nothing and Creation, I here swear,  
 Eterne Apollo! that thy Sister fair  
 Is of all these the gentlier-mightiest.  
 When thy gold breath is misting in the west,  
 She unobserved steals unto her throne,  
 And there she sits most meek and most alone;  
 As if she had not pomp subservient;  
 As if thine eye, high Poet! was not bent  
 Towards her with the Muses in thine heart;  
 As if the ministring stars kept not apart, 50  
 Waiting for silver-footed messages.  
 O Moon! the oldest shades 'mong oldest trees  
 Feel palpitations when thou lookest in:  
 O Moon! old boughs lisp forth a holier din  
 The while they feel thine airy fellowship.  
 Thou dost bless every where, with silver lip  
 Kissing dead things to life. The sleeping kine,  
 Couch'd in thy brightness, dream of fields divine:  
 Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,  
 Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes; 60  
 And yet thy benediction passeth not  
 One obscure hiding-place, one little spot

Where pleasure may be sent: the nested wren  
 Has thy fair face within its tranquil ken,  
 And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf  
 Takes glimpses of thee; thou art a relief  
 To the poor patient oyster, where it sleeps  
 Within its pearly house.—The mighty deeps,  
 The monstrous sea is thine—the myriad sea!  
 O Moon! far-spooming Ocean bows to thee, 70  
 And Tellus feels his forehead's cumbrous load.

Cynthia! where art thou now? What far abode  
 Of green or silvery bower doth enshrine  
 Such utmost beauty? Alas, thou dost pine  
 For one as sorrowful: thy cheek is pale  
 For one whose cheek is pale: thou dost bewail  
 His tears, who weeps for thee. Where dost thou sigh?  
 Ah! surely that light peeps from Vesper's eye,  
 Or what a thing is love! 'Tis She, but lo!  
 How chang'd, how full of ache, how gone in woe! 80  
 She dies at the thinnest cloud; her loveliness  
 Is wan on Neptune's blue: yet there's a stress  
 Of love-spangles, just off yon cape of trees,  
 Dancing upon the waves, as if to please  
 The curly foam with amorous influence.  
 O, not so idle: for down-glancing thence  
 She fathoms eddies, and runs wild about  
 O'erwhelming water-courses; scaring out  
 The thorny sharks from hiding-holes, and fright'ning  
 Their savage eyes with unaccustom'd lightning. 90  
 Where will the splendour be content to reach?  
 O love! how potent hast thou been to teach  
 Strange journeyings! Wherever beauty dwells,  
 In gulph or aerie, mountains or deep dells,  
 In light, in gloom, in star or blazing sun,  
 Thou pointest out the way, and straight 'tis won.  
 Amid his toil thou gav'st Leander breath;  
 Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams of death;  
 Thou madest Pluto bear thin element;  
 And now, O winged Chieftain! thou hast sent 100  
 A moon-beam to the deep, deep water-world,  
 To find Endymion.

On gold sand impearl'd  
 With lilly shells, and pebbles milky white,  
 Poor Cynthia greeted him, and sooth'd her light  
 Against his pallid face: he felt the charm  
 To breathlessness, and suddenly a warm

Of his heart's blood: 'twas very sweet; he stay'd  
 His wandering steps, and half-entranced laid  
 His head upon a tuft of straggling weeds,  
 To taste the gentle moon, and freshening beads, 110  
 Lash'd from the crystal roof by fishes' tails.  
 And so he kept, until the rosy veils  
 Mantling the east, by Aurora's peering hand  
 Were lifted from the water's breast, and fann'd  
 Into sweet air; and sober'd morning came  
 Meekly through billows:—when like taper-flame  
 Left sudden by a dallying breath of air,  
 He rose in silence, and once more 'gan fare  
 Along his fated way.

Far had he roam'd,  
 With nothing save the hollow vast, that foam'd, 120  
 Above, around, and at his feet; save things  
 More dead than Morpheus' imaginings:  
 Old rusted anchors, helmets, breast-plates large  
 Of gone sea-warriors; brazen beaks and targe;  
 Rudders that for a hundred years had lost  
 The sway of human hand; gold vase emboss'd  
 With long-forgotten story, and wherein  
 No reveller had ever dipp'd a chin  
 But those of Saturn's vintage; mouldering scrolls, 130  
 Writ in the tongue of heaven, by those souls  
 Who first were on the earth; and sculptures rude  
 In ponderous stone, developing the mood  
 Of ancient Nox;—then skeletons of man,  
 Of beast, behemoth, and leviathan,  
 And elephant, and eagle, and huge jaw  
 Of nameless monster. A cold leaden awe  
 These secrets struck into him; and unless  
 Dian had chaced away that heaviness,  
 He might have died: but now, with cheered feel,  
 He onward kept; wooing these thoughts to steal 140  
 About the labyrinth in his soul of love.

“What is there in thee, Moon! that thou shouldst move  
 My heart so potently? When yet a child  
 I oft have dried my tears when thou hast smil'd.  
 Thou seem'dst my sister: hand in hand we went  
 From eve to morn across the firmament.  
 No apples would I gather from the tree,  
 Till thou hadst cool'd their cheeks deliciously:  
 No tumbling water ever spake romance,  
 But when my eyes with thine thereon could dance: 150



No woods were green enough, no bower divine,  
 Until thou liftedst up thine eyelids fine:  
 In sowing time ne'er would I dibble take,  
 Or drop a seed, till thou wast wide awake;  
 And, in the summer tide of blossoming,  
 No one but thee hath heard me blythly sing  
 And mesh my dewy flowers all the night.  
 No melody was like a passing spright  
 If it went not to solemnize thy reign.  
 Yes, in my boyhood, every joy and pain 160  
 By thee were fashion'd to the self-same end;  
 And as I grew in years, still didst thou blend  
 With all my ardours: thou wast the deep glen;  
 Thou wast the mountain-top—the sage's pen—  
 The poet's harp—the voice of friends—the sun;  
 Thou wast the river—thou wast glory won;  
 Thou wast my clarion's blast—thou wast my steed—  
 My goblet full of wine—my topmost deed:—  
 Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon!  
 O what a wild and harmonized tune 170  
 My spirit struck from all the beautiful!  
 On some bright essence could I lean, and lull  
 Myself to immortality: I prest  
 Nature's soft pillow in a wakeful rest.  
 But, gentle Orb! there came a nearer bliss—  
 My strange love came—Felicity's abyss!  
 She came, and thou didst fade, and fade away—  
 Yet not entirely; no, thy starry sway  
 Has been an under-passion to this hour.  
 Now I begin to feel thine orby power 180  
 Is coming fresh upon me: O be kind,  
 Keep back thine influence, and do not blind  
 My sovereign vision.—Dearest love, forgive  
 That I can think away from thee and live!—  
 Pardon me, airy planet, that I prize  
 One thought beyond thine argent luxuries!  
 How far beyond!" At this a surpris'd start  
 Frosted the springing verdure of his heart;  
 For as he lifted up his eyes to swear  
 How his own goddess was past all things fair, 190  
 He saw far in the concave green of the sea  
 An old man sitting calm and peacefully.  
 Upon a weeded rock this old man sat,  
 And his white hair was awful, and a mat  
 Of weeds were cold beneath his cold thin feet;  
 And, ample as the largest winding-sheet,

A cloak of blue wrapp'd up his aged bones,  
 O'erwrought with symbols by the deepest groans  
 Of ambitious magic: every ocean-form  
 Was woven in with black distinctness; storm, 200  
 And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar,  
 Quicksand, and whirlpool, and deserted shore,  
 Were emblem'd in the woof; with every shape  
 That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape and cape.  
 The gulphing whale was like a dot in the spell,  
 Yet look upon it, and 'twould size and swell  
 To its huge self; and the minutest fish  
 Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,  
 And show his little eye's anatomy.  
 Then there was pictur'd the regality 210  
 Of Neptune; and the sea nymphs round his state,  
 In beautous vassalage, look up and wait.  
 Beside this old man lay a pearly wand,  
 And in his lap a book, the which he conn'd  
 So stedfastly, that the new denizen  
 Had time to keep him in amazed ken,  
 To mark these shadowings, and stand in awe.

The old man rais'd his hoary head and saw  
 The wilder'd stranger—seeming not to see,  
 His features were so lifeless. Suddenly 220  
 He woke as from a trance; his snow-white brows  
 Went arching up, and like two magic ploughs  
 Furrow'd deep wrinkles in his forehead large,  
 Which kept as fixedly as rocky marge,  
 Till round his wither'd lips had gone a smile.  
 Then up he rose, like one whose tedious toil  
 Had watch'd for years in forlorn hermitage,  
 Who had not from mid-life to utmost age  
 Eas'd in one accent his o'er-burden'd soul,  
 Even to the trees. He rose: he grasp'd his stole,  
 With convuls'd clenches waving it abroad, 231  
 And in a voice of solemn joy, that aw'd  
 Echo into oblivion, he said:—

"Thou art the man! Now shall I lay my head  
 In peace upon my watery pillow: now  
 Sleep will come smoothly to my weary brow.  
 O Jove! I shall be young again, be young!  
 O shell-borne Neptune, I am pierc'd and stung  
 With new-born life! What shall I do? Where go,  
 When I have cast this serpent-skin of woe?— 240

I'll swim to the syrens, and one moment listen  
 Their melodies, and see their long hair glisten;  
 Anon upon that giant's arm I'll be,  
 That writhes about the roots of Sicily:  
 To northern seas I'll in a twinkling sail,  
 And mount upon the snortings of a whale  
 To some black cloud; thence down I'll madly sweep  
 On forked lightning, to the deepest deep,  
 Where through some sucking pool I will be hurl'd  
 With rapture to the other side of the world! 250  
 O, I am full of gladness! Sisters three,  
 I bow full hearted to your old decree!  
 Yes, every god be thank'd, and power benign,  
 For I no more shall wither, droop, and pine.  
 Thou art the man!" Endymion started back  
 Dismay'd; and, like a wretch from whom the rack  
 Tortures hot breath, and speech of agony,  
 Mutter'd: "What lonely death am I to die  
 In this cold region? Will he let me freeze,  
 And float my brittle limbs o'er polar seas? 260  
 Or will he touch me with his searing hand,  
 And leave a black memorial on the sand?  
 Or tear me piece-meal with a bony saw,  
 And keep me as a chosen food to draw  
 His magian fish through hated fire and flame?  
 O misery of hell! resistless, tame,  
 Am I to be burnt up? No, I will shout,  
 Until the gods through heaven's blue look out!—  
 O Tartarus! but some few days ago  
 Her soft arms were entwining me, and on 270  
 Her voice I hung like fruit among green leaves:  
 Her lips were all my own, and—ah, ripe sheaves  
 Of happiness! ye on the stubble droop,  
 But never may be garner'd. I must stoop  
 My head, and kiss death's foot. Love! love, farewell!  
 Is there no hope from thee? This horrid spell  
 Would melt at thy sweet breath.—By Dian's hind  
 Feeding from her white fingers, on the wind  
 I see thy streaming hair! and now, by Pan,  
 I care not for this old mysterious man!" 280

He spoke, and walking to that aged form,  
 Look'd high defiance. Lo! his heart 'gan warm  
 With pity, for the grey-hair'd creature wept.  
 Had he then wrong'd a heart where sorrow kept?  
 Had he, though blindly contumelious, brought  
 Rheum to kind eyes, a sting to humane thought,

Convulsion to a mouth of many years?  
 He had in truth; and he was ripe for tears.  
 The penitent shower fell, as down he knelt  
 Before that care-worn sage, who trembling felt  
 About his large dark locks, and faltering spake: 290

“Arise, good youth, for sacred Phœbus’ sake!  
 I know thine inmost bosom, and I feel  
 A very brother’s yearning for thee steal  
 Into mine own: for why? thou openest  
 The prison gates that have so long opprest  
 My weary watching. Though thou know’st it not,  
 Thou art commission’d to this fated spot  
 For great enfranchisement. O weep no more;  
 I am a friend to love, to loves of yore: 300  
 Aye, hadst thou never lov’d an unknown power,  
 I had been grieving at this joyous hour.  
 But even now most miserable old,  
 I saw thee, and my blood no longer cold  
 Gave mighty pulses: in this tottering case  
 Grew a new heart, which at this moment plays  
 As dancingly as thine. Be not afraid,  
 For thou shalt hear this secret all display’d,  
 Now as we speed towards our joyous task.”

So saying, this young soul in age’s mask 310  
 Went forward with the Carian side by side:  
 Resuming quickly thus; while ocean’s tide  
 Hung swollen at their backs, and jewel’d sands  
 Took silently their foot-prints.

“My soul stands  
 Now past the midway from mortality,  
 And so I can prepare without a sigh  
 To tell thee briefly all my joy and pain.  
 I was a fisher once, upon this main,  
 And my boat danc’d in every creek and bay;  
 Rough billows were my home by night and day,—  
 The sea-gulls not more constant; for I had 321  
 No housing from the storm and tempests mad,  
 But hollow rocks,—and they were palaces  
 Of silent happiness, of slumberous ease:  
 Long years of misery have told me so.  
 Aye, thus it was one thousand years ago.  
 One thousand years!—Is it then possible  
 To look so plainly through them? to dispel  
 A thousand years with backward glance sublime?  
 To breathe away as ’twere all scummy slime 334

From off a crystal pool, to see its deep,  
 And one's own image from the bottom peep?  
 Yes: now I am no longer wretched thrall,  
 My long captivity and moanings all  
 Are but a slime, a thin-pervading scum,  
 The which I breathe away, and thronging come  
 Like things of yesterday my youthful pleasures.

“I touch'd no lute, I sang not, trod no measures:  
 I was a lonely youth on desert shores.  
 My sports were lonely, 'mid continuous roars, 340  
 And craggy isles, and sea-mew's plaintive cry  
 Plaining discrepant between sea and sky.  
 Dolphins were still my playmates; shapes unseen  
 Would let me feel their scales of gold and green,  
 Nor be my desolation; and, full oft,  
 When a dread waterspout had rear'd aloft  
 Its hungry hugeness, seeming ready ripe  
 To burst with hoarsest thunderings, and wipe  
 My life away like a vast sponge of fate, 350  
 Some friendly monster, pitying my sad state,  
 Has dived to its foundations, gulph'd it down,  
 And left me tossing sorely. But the crown  
 Of all my life was utmost quietude:  
 More did I love to lie in cavern rude,  
 Keeping in wait whole days for Neptune's voice,  
 And if it came at last, hark, and rejoice!  
 There blush'd no summer eve but I would steer  
 My skiff along green shelving coasts, to hear  
 The shepherd's pipe come clear from airy steep,  
 Mingled with ceaseless bleatings of his sheep: 360  
 And never was a day of summer shine,  
 But I beheld its birth upon the brine:  
 For I would watch all night to see unfold  
 Heaven's gates, and Æthon snort his morning gold  
 Wide o'er the swelling streams: and constantly  
 At brim of day-tide, on some grassy lea,  
 My nets would be spread out, and I at rest.  
 The poor folk of the sea-country I blest  
 With daily boon of fish most delicate:  
 They knew not whence this bounty, and elate 370  
 Would strew sweet flowers on a sterile beach.

“Why was I not contented? Wherefore reach  
 At things which, but for thee, O Latmian!  
 Had been my dreary death? Fool! I began

To feel distemper'd longings: to desire  
 The utmost privilege that ocean's sire  
 Could grant in benediction: to be free  
 Of all his kingdom. Long in misery  
 I wasted, ere in one extremest fit  
 I plung'd for life or death. To interknit 380  
 One's senses with so dense a breathing stuff  
 Might seem a work of pain; so not enough  
 Can I admire how crystal-smooth it felt,  
 And buoyant round my limbs. At first I dwelt  
 Whole days and days in sheer astonishment;  
 Forgetful utterly of self-intent;  
 Moving but with the mighty ebb and flow.  
 Then, like a new fledg'd bird that first doth show  
 His spreaded feathers to the morrow chill,  
 I tried in fear the pinions of my will. 390  
 'Twas freedom! and at once I visited  
 The ceaseless wonders of this ocean-bed.  
 No need to tell thee of them, for I see  
 That thou hast been a witness—it must be—  
 For these I know thou canst not feel a drouth,  
 By the melancholy corners of that mouth.  
 So I will in my story straightway pass  
 To more immediate matter. Woe, alas!  
 That love should be my bane! Ah, Scylla fair!  
 Why did poor Glaucus ever—ever dare 400  
 To sue thee to his heart? Kind stranger-youth!  
 I lov'd her to the very white of truth,  
 And she would not conceive it. Timid thing!  
 She fled me swift as sea-bird on the wing,  
 Round every isle, and point, and promontory,  
 From where large Hercules wound up his story  
 Far as Egyptian Nile. My passion grew  
 The more, the more I saw her dainty hue  
 Gleam delicately through the azure clear:  
 Until 'twas too fierce agony to bear; 410  
 And in that agony, across my grief  
 It flash'd, that Circe might find some relief—  
 Cruel enchantress! So above the water  
 I rear'd my head, and look'd for Phœbus' daughter.  
 Ææa's isle was wondering at the moon:—  
 It seem'd to whirl around me, and a swoon  
 Left me dead-drifting to that fatal power.

“When I awoke, 'twas in a twilight bower;  
 Just when the light of morn, with hum of bees,  
 Stole through its verdurous matting of fresh trees.

How sweet, and sweeter; for I heard a lyre,  
 And over it a sighing voice expire.  
 It ceased—I caught light footsteps; and anon  
 The fairest face that morn e'er look'd upon  
 Push'd through a screen of roses. Starry Jove!  
 With tears, and smiles, and honey-words she wove  
 A net whose thralldom was more bliss than all  
 The range of flower'd Elysium. Thus did fall  
 The dew of her rich speech: "Ah! Art awake?  
 "O let me hear thee speak, for Cupid's sake!  
 "I am so oppress'd with joy! Why, I have shed  
 "An urn of tears, as though thou wert cold dead;  
 "And now I find thee living, I will pour  
 "From these devoted eyes their silver store,  
 "Until exhausted of the latest drop,  
 "So it will pleasure thee, and force thee stop  
 "Here, that I too may live: but if beyond  
 "Such cool and sorrowful offerings, thou art fond  
 "Of soothing warmth, of dalliance supreme;  
 "If thou art ripe to taste a long love dream;  
 "If smiles, if dimples, tongues for ardour mute,  
 "Hang in thy vision like a tempting fruit,  
 "O let me pluck it for thee." Thus she link'd  
 Her charming syllables, till indistinct  
 Their music came to my o'er-sweeten'd soul;  
 And then she hover'd over me, and stole  
 So near, that if no nearer it had been  
 This furrow'd visage thou hadst never seen.

421

430

440

"Young man of Latmos! thus particular  
 Am I, that thou may'st plainly see how far  
 This fierce temptation went: and thou may'st not  
 Exclaim, How then, was Scylla quite forgot?"

450

"Who could resist? Who in this universe?  
 She did so breathe ambrosia; so immerse  
 My fine existence in a golden clime.  
 She took me like a child of suckling time,  
 And cradled me in roses. Thus condemn'd,  
 The current of my former life was stemm'd,  
 And to this arbitrary queen of sense  
 I bow'd a tranced vassal: nor would thence  
 Have mov'd, even though Amphion's harp had woo'd  
 Me back to Scylla o'er the billows rude.  
 For as Apollo each eve doth devise  
 A new appareling for western skies;

460

So every eve, nay every spendthrift hour  
 Shed balmy consciousness within that bower.  
 And I was free of haunts umbrageous;  
 Could wander in the mazy forest-house  
 Of squirrels, foxes shy, and antler'd deer,  
 And birds from coverts innermost and drear 470  
 Warbling for very joy melliflous sorrow—  
 To me new born delights!

“Now let me borrow,  
 For moments few, a temperament as stern  
 As Pluto's sceptre, that my words not burn  
 These uttering lips, while I in calm speech tell  
 How specious heaven was changed to real hell.

“One morn she left me sleeping: half awake  
 I sought for her smooth arms and lips, to slake  
 My greedy thirst with nectarous camel-draughts;  
 But she was gone. Whereat the barbed shafts 480  
 Of disappointment stuck in me so sore,  
 That out I ran and search'd the forest o'er.  
 Wandering about in pine and cedar gloom  
 Damp awe assail'd me; for there 'gan to boom  
 A sound of moan, an agony of sound,  
 Sepulchral from the distance all around.  
 Then came a conquering earth-thunder, and rumbled  
 That fierce complain to silence: while I stumbled  
 Down a precipitous path, as if impell'd.  
 I came to a dark valley.—Groanings swell'd 490  
 Poisonous about my ears, and louder grew,  
 The nearer I approach'd a flame's gaunt blue,  
 That glar'd before me through a thorny brake.  
 This fire, like the eye of gordian snake,  
 Bewitch'd me towards; and I soon was near  
 A sight too fearful for the feel of fear:  
 In thicket hid I curs'd the haggard scene—  
 The banquet of my arms, my arbour queen,  
 Seated upon an uptorn forest root;  
 And all around her shapes, wizard and brute, 500  
 Laughing and wailing, groveling, serpentine,  
 Showing tooth, tusk, and venom-bag, and sting!  
 O such deformities! Old Charon's self,  
 Should he give up awhile his penny pelf,  
 And take a dream 'mong rushes Stygian,  
 It could not be so phantasied. Fierce, wan,  
 And tyrannizing was the lady's look,  
 As over them a gnarled staff she shook.



Oft-times upon the sudden she laugh'd out,  
 And from a basket emptied to the rout 510  
 Clusters of grapes, the which they raven'd quick  
 And roar'd for more; with many a hungry lick  
 About their shaggy jaws. Avenging, slow,  
 Anon she took a branch of mistletoe,  
 And emptied on't a black dull-gurgling phial:  
 Groan'd one and all, as if some piercing trial  
 Was sharpening for their pitiabie bones.  
 She lifted up the charm: appealing groans  
 From their poor breasts went suing to her ear  
 In vain; remorseless as an infant's bier 520  
 She whisk'd against their eyes the sooty oil.  
 Whereat was heard a noise of painful toil,  
 Increasing gradual to a tempest rage,  
 Shrieks, yells, and groans of torture-pilgrimage;  
 Until their grieved bodies 'gan to bloat  
 And puff from the tail's end to stifled throat:  
 Then was appalling silence: then a sight  
 More wildering than all that hoarse affright;  
 For the whole herd, as by a whirlwind writhen,  
 Went through the dismal air like one huge Python  
 Antagonizing Boreas,—and so vanish'd. 531  
 Yet there was not a breath of wind: she banish'd  
 These phantoms with a nod. Lo! from the dark  
 Came waggish fauns, and nymphs, and satyrs stark,  
 With dancing and loud revelry,—and went  
 Swifter than centaurs after rapine bent.—  
 Sighing an elephant appear'd and bow'd  
 Before the fierce witch, speaking thus aloud  
 In human accent: "Potent goddess! chief  
 "Of pains resistless! make my being brief, 540  
 "Or let me from this heavy prison fly:  
 "Or give me to the air, or let me die!  
 "I sue not for my happy crown again;  
 "I sue not for my phalanx on the plain;  
 "I sue not for my lone, my widow'd wife;  
 "I sue not for my ruddy drops of life,  
 "My children fair, my lovely girls and boys!  
 "I will forget them; I will pass these joys;  
 "Ask nought so heavenward, so too—too high:  
 "Only I pray, as fairest boon, to die, 550  
 "Or be deliver'd from this cumbrous flesh,  
 "From this gross, detestable, filthy mesh,  
 "And merely given to the cold bleak air.  
 "Have mercy, Goddess! Circe, fee! my prayer!"

"That curst magician's name fell icy numb  
 Upon my wild conjecturing: truth had come  
 Naked and sabre-like against my heart.  
 I saw a fury whetting a death-dart;  
 And my slain spirit, overwrought with fright,  
 Fainted away in that dark lair of night. 560  
 Think, my deliverer, how desolate  
 My waking must have been! disgust, and hate,  
 And terrors manifold divided me  
 A spoil amongst them. I prepar'd to flee  
 Into the dungeon core of that wild wood:  
 I fled three days—when lo! before me stood  
 Glaring the angry witch. O Dis, even now,  
 A clammy dew is beading on my brow,  
 At mere remembering her pale laugh, and curse.  
 "Ha! ha! Sir Dainty! there must be a nurse 570  
 "Made of rose leaves and thistledown, express,  
 "To cradle thee my sweet, and lull thee: yes,  
 "I am too flinty-hard for thy nice touch:  
 "My tenderest squeeze is but a giant's clutch.  
 "So, fairy-thing, it shall have lullabies  
 "Unheard of yet: and it shall still its cries  
 "Upon some breast more lilly-feminine.  
 "Oh, no—it shall not pine, and pine, and pine  
 "More than one pretty, trifling thousand years;  
 "And then 'twere pity, but fate's gentle shears 580  
 "Cut short its immortality. Sea-flirt!  
 "Young dove of the waters! truly I'll not hurt  
 "One hair of thine: see how I weep and sigh,  
 "That our heart-broken parting is so nigh.  
 "And must we part? Ah, yes, it must be so.  
 "Yet ere thou leavest me in utter woe,  
 "Let me sob over thee my last adieus,  
 "And speak a blessing: Mark me! Thou hast thews  
 "Immortal, for thou art of heavenly race:  
 "But such a love is mine, that here I chace 590  
 "Eternally away from thee all bloom  
 "Of youth, and destine thee towards a tomb.  
 "Hence shalt thou quickly to the watery vast;  
 "And there, ere many days be overpast,  
 "Disabled age shall seize thee; and even then  
 "Thou shalt not go the way of aged men;  
 "But live and wither, cripple and still breathe  
 "Ten hundred years: which gone, I then bequeath  
 "Thy fragile bones to unknown burial.  
 "Adieu, sweet love, adieu!"—As shot stars fall,

She fled ere I could groan for mercy. Stung  
 And poison'd was my spirit: despair sung  
 A war-song of defiance 'gainst all hell.  
 A hand was at my shoulder to compel  
 My sullen steps; another 'fore my eyes  
 Moved on with pointed finger. In this guise  
 Enforced, at the last by ocean's foam  
 I found me; by my fresh, my native home.  
 Its tempering coolness, to my life akin,  
 Came salutary as I waded in; 610  
 And, with a blind voluptuous rage, I gave  
 Battle to the swollen billow-ridge, and drave  
 Large froth before me, while there yet remain'd  
 Hale strength, nor from my bones all marrow drain'd.

"Young lover, I must weep—such hellish spite  
 With dry cheek who can tell? While thus my might  
 Proving upon this element, dismay'd,  
 Upon a dead thing's face my hand I laid;  
 I look'd—'twas Scylla! Cursed, cursed Circe!  
 O vulture-witch, hast never heard of mercy? 620  
 Could not thy harshest vengeance be content,  
 But thou must nip this tender innocent  
 Because I lov'd her?—Cold, O cold indeed  
 Were her fair limbs, and like a common weed  
 The sea-swell took her hair. Dead as she was  
 I clung about her waist, nor ceas'd to pass  
 Fleet as an arrow through unfathom'd brine,  
 Until there shone a fabric crystalline,  
 Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and pearl.  
 Headlong I darted; at one eager swirl 630  
 Gain'd its bright portal, enter'd, and behold!  
 'Twas vast, and desolate, and icy-cold;  
 And all around—But wherefore this to thee  
 Who in few minutes more thyself shalt see?—  
 I left poor Scylla in a niche and fled.  
 My fever'd parchings up, my scathing dread  
 Met palsy half way: soon these limbs became  
 Gaunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd, and lame.

"Now let me pass a cruel, cruel space,  
 Without one hope, without one faintest trace 640  
 Of mitigation, or redeeming bubble  
 Of colour'd phantasy; for I fear 'twould trouble  
 Thy brain to loss of reason: and next tell  
 How a restoring chance came down to quell  
 One half of the witch in me.

"On a day,

Sitting upon a rock above the spray,  
 I saw grow up from the horizon's brink  
 A gallant vessel: soon she seem'd to sink  
 Away from me again, as though her course  
 Had been resum'd in spite of hindering force— 650  
 So vanish'd: and not long, before arose  
 Dark clouds, and muttering of winds morose.  
 Old Æolus would stifle his mad spleen,  
 But could not: therefore all the billows green  
 Toss'd up the silver spume against the clouds.  
 The tempest came: I saw that vessel's shrouds  
 In perilous bustle; while upon the deck  
 Stood trembling creatures. I beheld the wreck;  
 The final gulphing; the poor struggling souls:  
 I heard their cries amid loud thunder-rolls. 660  
 O they had all been sav'd but crazed eld  
 Annull'd my vigorous cravings: and thus quell'd  
 And curb'd, think on't, O Latmian! did I sit  
 Writhing with pity, and a cursing fit  
 Against that hell-born Circe. The crew had gone,  
 By one and one, to pale oblivion;  
 And I was gazing on the surges prone,  
 With many a scalding tear and many a groan,  
 When at my feet emerg'd an old man's hand,  
 Grasping this scroll, and this same slender wand. 670  
 I knelt with pain—reach'd out my hand—had grasp'd  
 These treasures—touch'd the knuckles—they unclasp'd—  
 I caught a finger: but the downward weight  
 O'erpowered me—it sank. Then 'gan abate  
 The storm, and through chill aguish gloom outburst  
 The comfortable sun. I was athirst  
 To search the book, and in the warming air  
 Parted its dripping leaves with eager care.  
 Strange matters did it treat of, and drew on  
 My soul page after page, till well-nigh won 680  
 Into forgetfulness; when, stupefied,  
 I read these words, and read again, and tried  
 My eyes against the heavens, and read again.  
 O what a load of misery and pain  
 Each Atlas-line bore off!—a shine of hope  
 Came gold around me, cheering me to cope  
 Strenuous with hellish tyranny. Attend!  
 For thou hast brought their promise to an end.

*"In wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch,  
 Doom'd with enfeebled carcass to outstretch*

*His loath'd existence through ten centuries,  
And then to die alone. Who can devise  
A total opposition? No one. So  
One million times ocean must ebb and flow,  
And he oppressed. Yet he shall not die,  
These things accomplish'd:—If he utterly  
Scans all the depths of magic, and expounds  
The meanings of all motions, shapes and sounds;  
If he explores all forms and substances  
Straight homeward to their symbol-essences;  
He shall not die. Moreover, and in chief,  
He must pursue this task of joy and grief  
Most piously;—all lovers tempest-tost,  
And in the savage overwhelming lost,  
He shall deposit side by side, until  
Time's creeping shall the dreary space fulfil:  
Which done, and all these labours ripened,  
A youth, by heavenly power lov'd and led,  
Shall stand before him; whom he shall direct  
How to consummate all. The youth elect  
Must do the thing, or both will be destroy'd.”—*

700

710

“Then,” cried the young Endymion, overjoy'd,  
“We are twin brothers in this destiny!  
Say, I intreat thee, what achievement high  
Is, in this restless world, for me reserv'd.  
What! if from thee my wandering feet had swerv'd,  
Had we both perish'd?”—“Look!” the sage replied,  
“Dost thou not mark a gleaming through the tide,  
Of diverse brilliances? 'tis the edifice  
I told thee of, where lovely Scylla lies;  
And where I have enshrined piously  
All lovers, whom fell storms have doom'd to die  
Throughout my bondage.” Thus discoursing, on  
They went till unobscur'd the porches shone;  
Which hurrying they gain'd, and enter'd straight.  
Sure never since king Neptune held his state  
Was seen such wonder underneath the stars.  
Turn to some level plain where haughty Mars  
Has legion'd all his battle; and behold  
How every soldier, with firm foot, doth hold  
His even breast: see, many steeled squares,  
And rigid ranks of iron—whence who dares  
One step? Imagine further, line by line,  
These warrior thousands on the field supine:—  
So in that crystal place, in silent rows,  
Poor lovers lay at rest from joys and woes.—

720

730

The stranger from the mountains, breathless, trac'd  
 Such thousands of shut eyes in order plac'd;  
 Such ranges of white feet, and patient lips  
 All ruddy,—for here death no blossom nips. 740  
 He mark'd their brows and foreheads; saw their hair  
 Put sleekly on one side with nicest care;  
 And each one's gentle wrists, with reverence,  
 Put cross-wise to its heart.

“Let us commence,”  
 Whisper'd the guide, stuttering with joy, “even now.”  
 He spake, and, trembling like an aspen-bough,  
 Began to tear his scroll in pieces small,  
 Uttering the while some mumblings funeral.  
 He tore it into pieces small as snow  
 That drifts unfeather'd when bleak northerns blow;  
 And having done it, took his dark blue cloak 751  
 And bound it round Endymion: then struck  
 His wand against the empty air times nine.—  
 “What more there is to do, young man, is thine:  
 But first a little patience; first undo  
 This tangled thread, and wind it to a clue.  
 Ah, gentle! 'tis as weak as spider's skein;  
 And shouldst thou break it—What, is it done so clean?  
 A power overshadows thee! O, brave!  
 The spite of hell is tumbling to its grave. 760  
 Here is a shell; 'tis pearly blank to me,  
 Nor mark'd with any sign or charactery—  
 Canst thou read aught? O read for pity's sake!  
 Olympus! we are safe! Now, Carian, break  
 This wand against yon lyre on the pedestal.”

'Twas done: and straight with sudden swell and fall  
 Sweet music breath'd her soul away, and sigh'd  
 A lullaby to silence.—“Youth! now strew  
 These minced leaves on me, and passing through  
 Those files of dead, scatter the same around, 770  
 And thou wilt see the issue.”—'Mid the sound  
 Of flutes and viols, ravishing his heart,  
 Endymion from Glaucus stood apart,  
 And scatter'd in his face some fragments light.  
 How lightning-swift the change! a youthful wight  
 Smiling beneath a coral diadem,  
 Out-sparkling sudden like an upturn'd gem,  
 Appear'd, and, stepping to a beauteous corse,  
 Kneel'd down beside it, and with tenderest force  
 Press'd its cold hand, and wept,—and Scylla sigh'd!  
 Endymion, with quick hand, the charm applied— 781

The nymph arose: he left them to their joy,  
 And onward went upon his high employ,  
 Showering those powerful fragments on the dead.  
 And, as he pass'd, each lifted up his head,  
 As doth a flower at Apollo's touch.  
 Death felt it to his inwards: 'twas too much:  
 Death fell a weeping in his charnel-house.  
 The Latmian persever'd along, and thus  
 All were re-animated. There arose 790  
 A noise of harmony, pulses and throes  
 Of gladness in the air—while many, who  
 Had died in mutual arms devout and true,  
 Sprang to each other madly; and the rest  
 Felt a high certainty of being blest.  
 They gaz'd upon Endymion. Enchantment  
 Grew drunken, and would have its head and bent.  
 Delicious symphonies, like airy flowers,  
 Budded, and swell'd, and, full-blown, shed full showers  
 Of light, soft, unseen leaves of sounds divine. 800  
 The two deliverers tasted a pure wine  
 Of happiness, from fairy-press ooz'd out.  
 Speechless they eyed each other, and about  
 The fair assembly wander'd to and fro,  
 Distracted with the richest overflow  
 Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven.

——“Away!”

Shouted the new born god; “Follow, and pay  
 Our piety to Neptunus supreme!”—  
 Then Scylla, blushing sweetly from her dream,  
 They led on first, bent to her meek surprise, 810  
 Through portal columns of a giant size,  
 Into the vaulted, boundless emerald.  
 Joyous all follow'd as the leader call'd,  
 Down marble steps; pouring as easily  
 As hour-glass sand,—and fast, as you might see  
 Swallows obeying the south summer's call,  
 Or swans upon a gentle waterfall.

Thus went that beautiful multitude, nor far,  
 Ere from among some rocks of glittering spar,  
 Just within ken, they saw descending thick 820  
 Another multitude. Whereat more quick  
 Moved either host. On a wide sand they met,  
 And of those numbers every eye was wet;  
 For each their old love found. A murmuring rose,  
 Like what was never heard in all the throes

Of wind and waters: 'tis past human wit  
To tell; 'tis dizziness to think of it.

This mighty consummation made, the host  
Mov'd on for many a league; and gain'd, and lost 830  
Huge sea-marks; vanward swelling in array,  
And from the rear diminishing away,—  
Till a faint dawn surpris'd them. Glaucus cried,  
“Behold! behold, the palace of his pride!  
God Neptune's palaces!” With noise increas'd,  
They shoulder'd on towards that brightening east.  
At every onward step proud domes arose  
In prospect,—diamond gleams, and golden glows  
Of amber 'gainst their faces levelling.  
Joyous, and many as the leaves in spring,  
Still onward; still the splendour gradual swell'd. 840  
Rich opal domes were seen, on high upheld  
By jasper pillars, letting through their shafts  
A blush of coral. Copious wonder-draughts  
Each gazer drank; and deeper drank more near:  
For what poor mortals fragment up, as mere  
As marble was there lavish, to the vast  
Of one fair palace, that far far surpass'd,  
Even for common bulk, those olden three,  
Memphis, and Babylon, and Nineveh.

As large, as bright, as colour'd as the bow 850  
Of Iris, when unfading it doth show  
Beyond a silvery shower, was the arch  
Through which this Paphian army took its march,  
Into the outer courts of Neptune's state:  
Whence could be seen, direct, a golden gate,  
To which the leaders sped; but not half raught  
Ere it burst open swift as fairy thought,  
And made those dazzled thousands veil their eyes  
Like callow eagles at the first sunrise.  
Soon with an eagle nativeness their gaze 860  
Ripe from hue-golden swoons took all the blaze,  
And then, behold! large Neptune on his throne  
Of emerald deep: yet not exalt alone;  
At his right hand stood winged Love, and on  
His left sat smiling Beauty's paragon.

Far as the mariner on highest mast  
Can see all round upon the calmed vast,  
So wide was Neptune's hall: and as the blue  
Doth vault the waters, so the waters drew



Their doming curtains, high, magnificent,  
 Aw'd from the throne aloof;—and when storm-rent  
 Disclos'd the thunder-gloomings in Jove's air;  
 But sooth'd as now, flash'd sudden everywhere,  
 Noiseless, sub-marine cloudlets, glittering  
 Death to a human eye: for there did spring  
 From natural west, and east, and south, and north,  
 A light as of four sunsets, blazing forth  
 A gold-green zenith 'bove the Sea-God's head.  
 Of lucid depth the floor, and far outspread  
 As breezeless lake, on which the slim canoe  
 Of feather'd Indian darts about, as through  
 The delicatest air: air verily,  
 But for the portraiture of clouds and sky:  
 This palace floor breath-air,—but for the amaze  
 Of deep-seen wonders motionless,—and blaze  
 Of the dome pomp, reflected in extremes,  
 Globing a golden sphere.

880

They stood in dreams  
 Till Triton blew his horn. The palace rang;  
 The Nereids danc'd; the Syrens faintly sang;  
 And the great Sea-King bow'd his dripping head.  
 Then Love took wing, and from his pinions shed  
 On all the multitude a nectarous dew.  
 The ooze-born Goddess beckoned and drew  
 Fair Scylla and her guides to conference;  
 And when they reach'd the throned eminence  
 She kist the sea-nymph's cheek,—who sat her down  
 A toying with the doves. Then,—“Mighty crown  
 And sceptre of this kingdom!” Venus said,  
 “Thy vows were on a time to Nais paid:  
 Behold!”— Two copious tear-drops instant fell  
 From the God's large eyes; he smil'd delectable,  
 And over Glaucus held his blessing hands.—  
 “Endymion! Ah! still wandering in the bands  
 Of love? Now this is cruel. Since the hour  
 I met thee in earth's bosom, all my power  
 Have I put forth to serve thee. What, not yet  
 Escap'd from dull mortality's harsh net?  
 A little patience, youth! 'twill not be long,  
 Or I am skillless quite: an idle tongue,  
 A humid eye, and steps luxurious,  
 Where these are new and strange, are ominous.  
 Aye, I have seen these signs in one of heaven,  
 When others were all blind: and were I given

890

900

910

To utter secrets, haply I might say  
 Some pleasant words:—but Love will have his day.  
 So wait awhile expectant. Pr'ythee soon,  
 Even in the passing of thine honey-moon,  
 Visit thou my Cythera: thou wilt find  
 Cupid well-natured, my Adonis kind;  
 And pray persuade with thee—Ah, I have done,  
 All blisses be upon thee, my sweet son!"— 921  
 Thus the fair goddess: While Endymion  
 Knelt to receive those accents halcyon.

Meantime a glorious revelry began  
 Before the Water-Monarch. Nectar ran  
 In courteous fountains to all cups outreach'd;  
 And plunder'd vines, teeming exhaustless, pleach'd  
 New growth about each shell and pendent lyre;  
 The which, in disentangling for their fire,  
 Pull'd down fresh foliage and coverture 930  
 For dainty toying. Cupid, empire-sure,  
 Flutter'd and laugh'd, and oft-times through the throng  
 Made a delighted way. Then dance, and song,  
 And garlanding grew wild; and pleasure reign'd.  
 In harmless tendril they each other chain'd,  
 And strove who should be smother'd deepest in  
 Fresh crush of leaves.

O 'tis a very sin  
 For one so weak to venture his poor verse  
 In such a place as this. O do not curse,  
 High Muses! let him hurry to the ending. 940

All suddenly were silent. A soft blending  
 Of dulcet instruments came charmingly;  
 And then a hymn.

"KING of the stormy sea!  
 Brother of Jove, and co-inheritor  
 Of elements! Eternally before  
 Thee the waves awful bow. Fast, stubborn rock,  
 At thy fear'd trident shrinking, doth unlock  
 Its deep foundations, hissing into foam.  
 All mountain-rivers, lost in the wide home  
 Of thy capacious bosom, ever flow. 950  
 Thou frownest, and old Æolus thy foe  
 Skulks to his cavern, 'mid the gruff complaint  
 Of all his rebel tempests. Dark clouds faint

When, from thy diadem, a silver gleam  
 Slants over blue dominion. Thy bright team  
 Gulphs in the morning light, and scuds along  
 To bring thee nearer to that golden song  
 Apollo singeth, while his chariot  
 Waits at the doors of heaven. Thou art not  
 For scenes like this: an empire stern hast thou;  
 960 And it hath furrow'd that large front: yet now,  
 As newly come of heaven, dost thou sit  
 To blend and interknit  
 Subdued majesty with this glad time.  
 O shell-borne King sublime!  
 We lay our hearts before thee evermore—  
 We sing, and we adore!

“Breathe softly, flutes;  
 Be tender of your strings, ye soothing lutes;  
 Nor be the trumpet heard! O vain, O vain;  
 970 Not flowers budding in an April rain,  
 Nor breath of sleeping dove, nor river's flow,—  
 No, nor the Æolian twang of Love's own bow,  
 Can mingle music fit for the soft ear  
 Of goddess Cytherea!  
 Yet deign, white Queen of Beauty, thy fair eyes  
 On our souls' sacrifice.

“Bright-winged Child!  
 Who has another care when thou hast smil'd?  
 980 Unfortunates on earth, we see at last  
 All death-shadows, and glooms that overcast  
 Our spirits, fann'd away by thy light pinions.  
 O sweetest essence! sweetest of all minions!  
 God of warm pulses, and dishevell'd hair,  
 And panting bosoms bare!  
 Dear unseen light in darkness! eclipser  
 Of light in light! delicious poisoner!  
 Thy venom'd goblet will we quaff until  
 We fill—we fill!  
 And by thy Mother's lips——”

Was heard no more 990  
 For clamour, when the golden palace door  
 Opened again, and from without, in shone  
 A new magnificence. On oozy throne  
 Smooth-moving came Oceanus the old,  
 To take a latest glimpse at his sheep-fold,  
 Before he went into his quiet cave  
 To muse for ever—Then a lucid wave,

Scoop'd from its trembling sisters of mid-sea,  
 Afloat, and pillowing up the majesty  
 Of Doris, and the Ægean seer, her spouse— 1000  
 Next, on a dolphin, clad in laurel boughs,  
 Theban Amphion leaning on his lute:  
 His fingers went across it—All were mute  
 To gaze on Amphitrite, queen of pearls,  
 And Thetis pearly too.—

The palace whirls

Around giddy Endymion; seeing he  
 Was there far strayed from mortality.  
 He could not bear it—shut his eyes in vain;  
 Imagination gave a dizzier pain.  
 "O I shall die! sweet Venus, be my stay! 1010  
 Where is my lovely mistress? Well-away!  
 I die—I hear her voice—I feel my wing—"—  
 At Neptune's feet he sank. A sudden ring  
 Of Nereids were about him, in kind strife  
 To usher back his spirit into life:  
 But still he slept. At last they interwove  
 Their cradling arms, and purpos'd to convey  
 Towards a crystal bower far away.

Lo! while slow carried through the pitying crowd,  
 To his inward senses these words spake aloud; 1020  
 Written in star-light on the dark above:  
*Dearest Endymion! my entire love!*  
*How have I dwelt in fear of fate: 'tis done—*  
*Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.*  
*Arise then! for the hen-dove shall not hatch*  
*Her ready eggs, before I'll kissing snatch*  
*Thee into endless heaven. Awake! awake!*

The youth at once arose: a placid lake  
 Came quiet to his eyes; and forest green,  
 Cooler than all the wonders he had seen, 1030  
 Lull'd with its simple song his fluttering breast.  
 How happy once again in grassy nest!

## BOOK IV

MUSE of my native land! loftiest Muse!  
 O first-born on the mountains! by the hues  
 Of heaven on the spiritual air begot:  
 Long didst thou sit alone in northern grot,

While yet our England was a wolfish den;  
 Before our forests heard the talk of men;  
 Before the first of Druids was a child;—  
 Long didst thou sit amid our regions wild  
 Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude.  
 There came an eastern voice of solemn mood:— 10  
 Yet wast thou patient. Then sang forth the Nine,  
 Apollo's garland:—yet didst thou divine  
 Such home-bred glory, that they cry'd in vain,  
 "Come hither, Sister of the Island!" Plain  
 Spake fair Ausonia; and once more she spake  
 A higher summons:—still didst thou betake  
 Thee to thy native hopes. O thou hast won  
 A full accomplishment! The thing is done,  
 Which undone, these our latter days had risen  
 On barren souls. Great Muse, thou know'st what prison,  
 Of flesh and bone, curbs, and confines, and frets 21  
 Our spirit's wings: despondency besets  
 Our pillows; and the fresh to-morrow morn  
 Seems to give forth its light in very scorn  
 Of our dull, uninspired, snail-paced lives.  
 Long have I said, how happy he who shrives  
 To thee! But then I thought on poets gone,  
 And could not pray:—nor could I now—so on  
 I move to the end in lowliness of heart.—

"Ah, woe is me! that I should fondly part 30  
 From my dear native land! Ah, foolish maid!  
 Glad was the hour, when, with thee, myriads bade  
 Adieu to Ganges and their pleasant fields!  
 To one so friendless the clear freshet yields  
 A bitter coolness; the ripe grape is sour:  
 Yet I would have, great gods! but one short hour  
 Of native air—let me but die at home."

Endymion to heaven's airy dome  
 Was offering up a hecatomb of vows,  
 When these words reach'd him. Whereupon he bows  
 His head through thorny-green entanglement 41  
 Of underwood, and to the sound is bent,  
 Anxious as hind towards her hidden fawn.

"Is no one near to help me? No fair dawn  
 Of life from charitable voice? No sweet saying  
 To set my dull and sadden'd spirit playing?

No hand to toy with mine? No lips so sweet  
 That I may worship them? No eyelids meet  
 To twinkle on my bosom? No one dies  
 Before me, till from these enslaving eyes  
 Redemption sparkles!—I am sad and lost.” 50

Thou, Carian lord, hadst better have been tost  
 Into a whirlpool. Vanish into air,  
 Warm mountaineer! for canst thou only bear  
 A woman's sigh alone and in distress?  
 See not her charms! Is Phœbe passionless?  
 Phœbe is fairer far—O gaze no more:—  
 Yet if thou wilt behold all beauty's store,  
 Behold her panting in the forest grass!  
 Do not those curls of glossy jet surpass 60  
 For tenderness the arms so idly lain  
 Amongst them? Feelest not a kindred pain,  
 To see such lovely eyes in swimming search  
 After some warm delight, that seems to perch  
 Dovelike in the dim cell lying beyond  
 Their upper lids?—Hist!

“O for Hermes' wand,  
 To touch this flower into human shape!  
 That woodland Hyacinthus could escape  
 From his green prison, and here kneeling down  
 Call me his queen, his second life's fair crown! 70  
 Ah me, how I could love!—My soul doth melt  
 For the unhappy youth—Love! I have felt  
 So faint a kindness, such a meek surrender  
 To what my own full thoughts had made too tender,  
 That but for tears my life had fled away!—  
 Ye deaf and senseless minutes of the day,  
 And thou, old forest, hold ye this for true,  
 There is no lightning, no authentic dew  
 But in the eye of love: there's not a sound,  
 Melodious howsoever, can confound 80  
 The heavens and earth in one to such a death  
 As doth the voice of love: there's not a breath  
 Will mingle kindly with the meadow air,  
 Till it has panted round, and stolen a share  
 Of passion from the heart!”—

Upon a bough  
 He leant, wretched. He surely cannot now  
 Thirst for another love: O impious,  
 That he can ever dream upon it thus!—

Thought he, "Why am I not as are the dead,  
 Since to a woe like this I have been led  
 Through the dark earth, and through the wondrous sea?  
 Goddess! I love thee not the less: from thee  
 By Juno's smile I turn not—no, no, no—  
 While the great waters are at ebb and flow.—  
 I have a triple soul! O fond pretence—  
 For both, for both my love is so immense,  
 I feel my heart is cut for them in twain."

90

And so he groan'd, as one by beauty slain.  
 The lady's heart beat quick, and he could see  
 Her gentle bosom heave tumultuously.  
 He sprang from his green covert: there she lay,  
 Sweet as a muskrose upon new-made hay;  
 With all her limbs on tremble, and her eyes  
 Shut softly up alive. To speak he tries.  
 "Fair damsel, pity me! forgive that I  
 Thus violate thy bower's sanctity!  
 O pardon me, for I am full of grief—  
 Grief born of thee, young angel! fairest thief!  
 Who stolen hast away the wings wherewith  
 I was to top the heavens. Dear maid, sith  
 Thou art my executioner, and I feel  
 Loving and hatred, misery and weal,  
 Will in a few short hours be nothing to me,  
 And all my story that much passion slew me;  
 Do smile upon the evening of my days:  
 And, for my tortur'd brain begins to craze,  
 Be thou my nurse; and let me understand  
 How dying I shall kiss that lilly hand.—  
 Dost weep for me? Then should I be content.  
 Scowl on, ye fates! until the firmament  
 Outblackens Erebus, and the full-cavern'd earth  
 Crumbles into itself. By the cloud girth  
 Of Jove, those tears have given me a thirst  
 To meet oblivion."—As her heart would burst  
 The maiden sobb'd awhile, and then replied:  
 "Why must such desolation betide  
 As that thou speak'st of? Are not these green nooks  
 Empty of all misfortune? Do the brooks  
 Utter a gorgon voice? Does yonder thrush,  
 Schooling its half-fledg'd little ones to brush  
 About the dewy forest, whisper tales?—  
 Speak not of grief, young stranger, or cold snails

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130

Will slime the rose to night. Though if thou wilt,  
 Methinks 'twould be a guilt—a very guilt—  
 Not to companion thee, and sigh away  
 The light—the dusk—the dark—till break of day!”  
 “Dear lady,” said Endymion, “ ’tis past:  
 I love thee! and my days can never last.  
 That I may pass in patience still speak:  
 Let me have music dying, and I seek 140  
 No more delight—I bid adieu to all.  
 Didst thou not after other climates call,  
 And murmur about Indian streams?”—Then she,  
 Sitting beneath the midmost forest tree,  
 For pity sang this roundelay——

“O Sorrow,  
 Why dost borrow  
 The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips?—  
 To give maiden blushes  
 To the white rose bushes? 150  
 Or is't thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

“O Sorrow,  
 Why dost borrow  
 The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye?—  
 To give the glow-worm light?  
 Or, on a moonless night,  
 To tinge, on syren shores, the salt sea-spray?

“O Sorrow,  
 Why dost borrow  
 The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue?— 160  
 To give at evening pale  
 Unto the nightingale,  
 That thou mayst listen the cold dews among?

“O Sorrow,  
 Why dost borrow  
 Heart's lightness from the merriment of May?—  
 A lover would not tread  
 A cowslip on the head,  
 Though he should dance from eve till peep of day— 170  
 Nor any drooping flower  
 Held sacred for thy bower,  
 Wherever he may sport himself and play.



"To Sorrow,  
 I bade good-morrow,  
 And thought to leave her far away behind;  
 But cheerly, cheerly,  
 She loves me dearly;  
 She is so constant to me, and so kind:  
 I would deceive her  
 And so leave her, 180  
 But ah! she is so constant and so kind.

"Beneath my palm trees, by the river side,  
 I sat a weeping: in the whole world wide  
 There was no one to ask me why I wept,—  
 And so I kept  
 Brimming the water-lilly cups with tears  
 Cold as my fears.

"Beneath my palm trees, by the river side,  
 I sat a weeping: what enamour'd bride,  
 Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds, 190  
 But hides and shrouds  
 Beneath dark palm trees by a river side?

"And as I sat, over the light blue hills  
 There came a noise of revellers: the rills  
 Into the wide stream came of purple hue—  
 'Twas Bacchus and his crew!  
 The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills  
 From kissing cymbals made a merry din—  
 'Twas Bacchus and his kin!  
 Like to a moving vintage down they came, 200  
 Crown'd with green leaves, and faces all on flame;  
 All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,  
 To scare thee, Melancholy!  
 O then, O then, thou wast a simple name!  
 And I forgot thee, as the berried holly  
 By shepherds is forgotten, when, in June,  
 Tall chestnuts keep away the sun and moon: —  
 I rush'd into the folly!

"Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,  
 Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood, 210  
 With sidelong laughing;  
 And little rills of crimson wine imbrued  
 His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough white  
 For Venus' pearly bite:

And near him rode Silenus on his ass,  
 Pelted with flowers as he on did pass  
 Tipsily quaffing.

“Whence came ye, merry Damsels! whence came ye!  
 So many, and so many, and such glee?  
 Why have ye left your bowers desolate,  
 Your lutes, and gentler fate?— 220  
 ‘We follow Bacchus! Bacchus on the wing,  
 A conquering!  
 Bacchus, young Bacchus! good or ill betide,  
 We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide:—  
 Come hither, lady fair, and joined be  
 To our wild minstrelsy!’

“Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs! whence came ye!  
 So many, and so many, and such glee?  
 Why have ye left your forest haunts, why left 230  
 Your nuts in oak-tree cleft?—  
 ‘For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree;  
 For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms,  
 And cold mushrooms;  
 For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth;  
 Great God of breathless cups and chirping mirth!—  
 Come hither, lady fair, and joined be  
 To our mad minstrelsy!’

“Over wide streams and mountains great we went,  
 And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent, 240  
 Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,  
 With Asian elephants:  
 Onward these myriads—with song and dance,  
 With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians’ prance,  
 Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,  
 Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,  
 Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil  
 Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers’ toil:  
 With toying oars and silken sails they glide,  
 Nor care for wind and tide. 250

“Mounted on panthers’ furs and lions’ manes,  
 From rear to van they scour about the plains;  
 A three days’ journey in a moment done:  
 And always, at the rising of the sun,  
 About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn,  
 On spleenful unicorns.

"I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown  
 Before the vine-wreath crown!  
 I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing  
 To the silver cymbals' ring! 260  
 I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce  
 Old Tartary the fierce!  
 The kings of Inde their jewel-sceptres vail,  
 And from their treasures scatter pearled hail;  
 Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,  
 And all his priesthood moans;  
 Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.—  
 Into these regions came I following him,  
 Sick hearted, weary—so I took a whim  
 To stray away into these forests drear 270  
 Alone, without a peer:  
 And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

"Young stranger!  
 I've been a ranger  
 In search of pleasure throughout every clime:  
 Alas, 'tis not for me!  
 Bewitch'd I sure must be,  
 To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

"Come then, Sorrow!  
 Sweetest Sorrow! 280  
 Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast:  
 I thought to leave thee  
 And deceive thee,  
 But now of all the world I love thee best.

"There is not one,  
 No, no, not one  
 But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid:  
 Thou art her mother,  
 And her brother,  
 Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade." 290

O what a sigh she gave in finishing,  
 And look, quite dead to every worldly thing!  
 Endymion could not speak, but gazed on her;  
 And listened to the wind that now did stir  
 About the crisped oaks full drearily,  
 Yet with as sweet a softness as might be  
 Remember'd from its velvet summer song.  
 At last he said: "Poor lady, how thus long

Have I been able to endure that voice?  
 Fair Melody! kind Syren! I've no choice; 300  
 I must be thy sad servant evermore:  
 I cannot choose but kneel here and adore.  
 Alas, I must not think—by Phœbe, no!  
 Let me not think, soft Angel! shall it be so?  
 Say, beautifullest, shall I never think?  
 O thou could'st foster me beyond the brink  
 Of recollection! make my watchful care  
 Close up its bloodshot eyes, nor see despair!  
 Do gently murder half my soul, and I  
 Shall feel the other half so utterly!— 310  
 I'm giddy at that cheek so fair and smooth;  
 O let it blush so ever! let it soothe  
 My madness! let it mantle rosy-warm  
 With the tinge of love, panting in safe alarm.—  
 This cannot be thy hand, and yet it is;  
 And this is sure thine other softling—this  
 Thine own fair bosom, and I am so near!  
 Wilt fall asleep? O let me sip that tear!  
 And whisper one sweet word that I may know  
 This is this world—sweet dewy blossom!—"Woe! 320  
*Woe! Woe to that Endymion! Where is he?—*  
 Even these words went echoing dismally  
 Through the wide forest—a most fearful tone,  
 Like one repenting in his latest moan;  
 And while it died away a shade pass'd by,  
 As of a thunder cloud. When arrows fly  
 Through the thick branches, poor ring-doves sleek forth  
 Their timid necks and tremble; so these both  
 Leant to each other trembling, and sat so  
 Waiting for some destruction—when lo, 330  
 Foot-feather'd Mercury appear'd sublime  
 Beyond the tall tree tops; and in less time  
 Than shoots the slanted hail-storm, down he dropt  
 Towards the ground; but rested not, nor stopt  
 One moment from his home: only the sward  
 He with his wand light touch'd, and heavenward  
 Swifter than sight was gone—even before  
 The teeming earth a sudden witness bore  
 Of his swift magic. Diving swans appear  
 Above the crystal circlings white and clear; 340  
 And-catch the cheated eye in wide surprise,  
 How they can dive in sight and unseen rise—  
 So from the turf outsprang two steeds jet-black,  
 Each with large dark blue wings upon his back.

The youth of Caria plac'd the lovely dame  
 On one, and felt himself in spleen to tame  
 The other's fierceness. Through the air they flew,  
 High as the eagles. Like two drops of dew  
 Exhal'd to Phœbus' lips, away they are gone,  
 Far from the earth away—unseen, alone, 350  
 Among cool clouds and winds, but that the free,  
 The buoyant life of song can floating be  
 Above their heads, and follow them untir'd.—  
 Muse of my native land, am I inspir'd?  
 This is the giddy air, and I must spread  
 Wide pinions to keep here; nor do I dread  
 Or height, or depth, or width, or any chance  
 Precipitous: I have beneath my glance  
 Those towering horses and their mournful freight.  
 Could I thus sail, and see, and thus await 360  
 Fearless for power of thought, without thine aid?—

There is a sleepy dusk, an odorous shade  
 From some approaching wonder, and behold  
 Those winged steeds, with snorting nostrils bold  
 Snuff at its faint extreme, and seem to tire,  
 Dying to embers from their native fire!

There curl'd a purple mist around them; soon,  
 It seem'd as when around the pale new moon  
 Sad Zephyr droops the clouds like weeping willow:  
 'Twas Sleep slow journeying with head on pillow. 370  
 For the first time, since he came nigh dead born  
 From the old womb of night, his cave forlorn  
 Had he left more forlorn; for the first time,  
 He felt aloof the day and morning's prime—  
 Because into his depth Cimmerian  
 There came a dream, showing how a young man,  
 Ere a lean bat could plump its wintery skin,  
 Would at high Jove's empyreal footstool win  
 An immortality, and how espouse 380  
 Jove's daughter, and be reckon'd of his house.  
 Now was he slumbering towards heaven's gate,  
 That he might at the threshold one hour wait  
 To hear the marriage melodies, and then  
 Sink downward to his dusky cave again.  
 His litter of smooth semiluculent mist,  
 Diversely ting'd with rose and amethyst,  
 Puzzled those eyes that for the centre sought;  
 And scarcely for one moment could be caught

His sluggish form reposing motionless.  
 Those two on winged steeds, with all the stress  
 Of vision search'd for him, as one would look  
 Athwart the sallows of a river nook  
 To catch a glance at silver-throated eels,—  
 Or from old Skiddaw's top, when fog conceals  
 His rugged forehead in a mantle pale,  
 With an eye-guess towards some pleasant vale  
 Descry a favourite hamlet faint and far.

390

These raven horses, though they foster'd are  
 Of earth's splenetic fire, dully drop  
 Their full-vein'd ears, nostrils blood wide, and stop;  
 Upon the spiritless mist have they outspread  
 Their ample feathers, are in slumber dead,—  
 And on those pinions, level in mid air,  
 Endymion sleepeth and the lady fair.  
 Slowly they sail, slowly as icy isle  
 Upon a calm sea drifting: and meanwhile  
 The mournful wanderer dreams. Behold! he walks  
 On heaven's pavement; brotherly he talks  
 To divine powers: from his hand full fain  
 Juno's proud birds are pecking pearly grain:  
 He tries the nerve of Phœbus' golden bow,  
 And asketh where the golden apples grow:  
 Upon his arm he braces Pallas' shield,  
 And strives in vain to unsettle and wield  
 A Jovian thunderbolt: arch Hebe brings  
 A full-brimm'd goblet, dances lightly, sings  
 And tantalizes long; at last he drinks,  
 And lost in pleasure at her feet he sinks,  
 Touching with dazzled lips her starlight hand.  
 He blows a bugle,—an ethereal band  
 Are visible above: the Seasons four,—  
 Green-kyrtled Spring, flush Summer, golden store  
 In Autumn's sickle, Winter frosty hoar,  
 Join dance with shadowy Hours; while still the blast,  
 In swells unmitigated, still doth last  
 To sway their floating morris. "Whose is this?  
 Whose bugle?" he inquires; they smile—"O Dis!  
 Why is this mortal here? Dost thou not know  
 Its mistress' lips? Not thou?—'Tis Dian's: lo!  
 She rises crescented!" He looks, 'tis she,  
 His very goddess: good-bye earth, and sea,  
 And air, and pains, and care, and suffering;  
 Good-bye to all but love! Then doth he spring

400

410

420

430

Towards her, and awakes—and, strange, o'erhead,  
 Of those same fragrant exhalations bred,  
 Beheld awake his very dream: the gods  
 Stood smiling; merry Hebe laughs and nods;  
 And Phœbe bends towards him crescented.  
 O state perplexing! On the pinion bed,  
 Too well awake, he feels the panting side 440  
 Of his delicious lady. He who died  
 For soaring too audacious in the sun,  
 When that same treacherous wax began to run,  
 Felt not more tongue-tied than Endymion.  
 His heart leapt up as to its rightful throne,  
 To that fair shadow'd passion puls'd its way—  
 Ah, what perplexity! Ah, well a day!  
 So fond, so beauteous was his bed-fellow,  
 He could not help but kiss her: then he grew 450  
 Awhile forgetful of all beauty save  
 Young Phœbe's, golden hair'd; and so 'gan crave  
 Forgiveness: yet he turn'd once more to look  
 At the sweet sleeper,—all his soul was shook,—  
 She press'd his hand in slumber; so once more  
 He could not help but kiss her and adore.  
 At this the shadow wept, melting away.  
 The Latmian started up: "Bright goddess, stay!  
 Search my most hidden breast! By truth's own tongue,  
 I have no dædale heart: why is it wrung  
 To desperation? Is there nought for me, 460  
 Upon the bourne of bliss, but misery?"

These words awoke the stranger of dark tresses:  
 Her dawning love-look rapt Endymion blesses  
 With 'haviour soft. Sleep yawn'd from underneath.  
 "Thou swan of Ganges, let us no more breathe  
 This murky phantasm! thou contented seem'st  
 Pillow'd in lovely idleness, nor dream'st  
 What horrors may discomfort thee and me.  
 Ah, shouldst thou die from my heart-treachery!—  
 Yet did she merely weep—her gentle soul 470  
 Hath no revenge in it: as it is whole  
 In tenderness, would I were whole in love!  
 Can I prize thee, fair maid, all price above,  
 Even when I feel as true as innocence?  
 I do, I do.—What is this soul then? Whence  
 Came it? It does not seem my own, and I  
 Have no self-passion or identity.  
 Some fearful end must be: where, where is it?  
 By Nemesis, I see my spirit flit

Alone about the dark—Forgive me, sweet: 480  
 Shall we away?" He rous'd the steeds: they beat  
 Their wings chivalrous into the clear air,  
 Leaving old Sleep within his vapoury lair.

The good-night blush of eve was waning slow,  
 And Vesper, risen star, began to throe  
 In the dusk heavens silverly, when they  
 Thus sprang direct towards the Galaxy.  
 Nor did speed hinder converse soft and strange—  
 Eternal oaths and vows they interchange, 490  
 In such wise, in such temper, so aloof  
 Up in the winds, beneath a starry roof,  
 So witless of their doom, that verily  
 'Tis well nigh past man's search their hearts to see;  
 Whether they wept, or laugh'd, or griev'd, or toy'd—  
 Most like with joy gone mad, with sorrow cloy'd.

Full facing their swift flight, from ebon streak,  
 The moon put forth a little diamond peak,  
 No bigger than an unobserved star,  
 Or tiny point of fairy scymetar;  
 Bright signal that she only stoop'd to tie 500  
 Her silver sandals, ere deliciously  
 She bow'd into the heavens her timid head.  
 Slowly she rose, as though she would have fled,  
 While to his lady meek the Carian turn'd,  
 To mark if her dark eyes had yet discern'd  
 This beauty in its birth—Despair! despair!  
 He saw her body fading gaunt and spare  
 In the cold moonshine. Straight he seiz'd her wrist;  
 It melted from his grasp: her hand he kiss'd,  
 And, horror! kiss'd his own—he was alone. 510  
 Her steed a little higher soar'd, and then  
 Dropt hawkwise to the earth.

There lies a den,  
 Beyond the seeming confines of the space  
 Made for the soul to wander in and trace  
 Its own existence, of remotest glooms.  
 Dark regions are around it, where the tombs  
 Of buried griefs the spirit sees, but scarce  
 One hour doth linger weeping, for the pierce  
 Of new-born woe it feels more inly smart:  
 And in these regions many a venom'd dart 520  
 At random flies; they are the proper home  
 Of every ill: the man is yet to come



Who hath not journeyed in this native hell.  
 But few have ever felt how calm and well  
 Sleep may be had in that deep den of all.  
 There anguish does not sting; nor pleasure pall:  
 Woe-hurricanes beat ever at the gate,  
 Yet all is still within and desolate.  
 Beset with plainful gusts, within ye hear  
 No sound so loud as when on curtain'd bier 530  
 The death-watch tick is stifled. Enter none  
 Who strive therefore on the sudden it is won.  
 Just when the sufferer begins to burn,  
 Then it is free to him; and from an urn,  
 Still fed by melting ice, he takes a draught—  
 Young Semele such richness never quaff  
 In her maternal longing! Happy gloom!  
 Dark Paradise! where pale becomes the bloom  
 Of health by due; where silence dreariest 540  
 Is most articulate; where hopes infest;  
 Where those eyes are the brightest far that keep  
 Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.  
 O happy spirit-home! O wondrous soul!  
 Pregnant with such a den to save the whole  
 In thine own depth. Hail, gentle Carian!  
 For, never since thy griefs and woes began,  
 Hast thou felt so content: a grievous feud  
 Hath led thee to this Cave of Quietude.  
 Aye, his lull'd soul was there, although upborne  
 With dangerous speed: and so he did not mourn  
 Because he knew not whither he was going. 551  
 So happy was he, not the aerial blowing  
 Of trumpets at clear parley from the east  
 Could rouse from that fine relish, that high feast.  
 They stung the feather'd horse: with fierce alarm  
 He flapp'd towards the sound. Alas, no charm  
 Could lift Endymion's head, or he had view'd  
 A skyeey mask, a pinion'd multitude,—  
 And silvery was its passing: voices sweet  
 Warbling the while as if to lull and greet 560  
 The wanderer in his path. Thus warbled they,  
 While past the vision went in bright array.

“Who, who from Dian's feast would be away?  
 For all the golden bowers of the day  
 Are empty left? Who, who away would be  
 From Cynthia's wedding and festivity?  
 Not Hesperus: lo! upon his silver wings  
 He leans away for highest heaven and sings,

Snapping his lucid fingers merrily!—  
 Ah, Zephyrus! art here, and Flora too!  
 Ye tender bibbers of the rain and dew,  
 Young playmates of the rose and daffodil,  
 Be careful, ere ye enter in, to fill

570

Your baskets high  
 With fennel green, and balm, and golden pines,  
 Savory, latter-mint, and columbines,  
 Cool parsley, basil sweet, and sunny thyme;  
 Yea, every flower and leaf of every clime,  
 All gather'd in the dewy morning: hie

Away! fly, fly!—

580

Crystalline brother of the belt of heaven,  
 Aquarius! to whom king Jove has given  
 Two liquid pulse streams 'stead of feather'd wings,  
 Two fan-like fountains,—thine illuminings

For Dian play:

Dissolve the frozen purity of air;  
 Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare  
 Show cold through watery pinions; make more bright  
 The Star-Queen's crescent on her marriage night:

Haste, haste away!—

590

Castor has tamed the planet Lion, see!  
 And of the Bear has Pollux mastery:  
 A third is in the race! who is the third  
 Speeding away swift as the eagle bird?

The ramping Centaur!

The Lion's mane's on end: the Bear how fierce!  
 The Centaur's arrow ready seems to pierce  
 Some enemy: far forth his bow is bent  
 Into the blue of heaven. He'll be shent,

Pale unrelentor,

600

When he shall hear the wedding lutes a playing.—  
 Andromeda! sweet woman! why delaying  
 So timidly among the stars: come hither!  
 Join this bright throng, and nimbly follow whither

They all are going.

Danae's Son, before Jove newly bow'd,  
 Has wept for thee, calling to Jove aloud.  
 Thee, gentle lady, did he disenthral:  
 Ye shall for ever live and love, for all

Thy tears are flowing.—

610

By Daphne's fright, behold Apollo!—"

More

Endymion heard not: down his steed him bore,  
 Prone to the green head of a misty hill.

His first touch of the earth went nigh to kill.  
 "Alas!" said he, "were I but always borne  
 Through dangerous winds, had but my footsteps worn  
 A path in hell, for ever would I bless  
 Horrors which nourish an uneasiness  
 For my own sullen conquering: to him  
 Who lives beyond earth's boundary, grief is dim,  
 Sorrow is but a shadow: now I see 621  
 The grass; I feel the solid ground—Ah, me!  
 It is thy voice—divinest! Where?—who? who  
 Left thee so quiet on this bed of dew?  
 Behold upon this happy earth we are;  
 Let us aye love each other; let us fare  
 On forest-fruits, and never, never go  
 Among the abodes of mortals here below,  
 Or be by phantoms duped. O destiny!  
 Into a labyrinth now my soul would fly, 630  
 But with thy beauty will I deaden it.  
 Where didst thou melt to? By thee will I sit  
 For ever: let our fate stop here—a kid  
 I on this spot will offer: Pan will bid  
 Us live in peace, in love and peace among  
 His forest wildernesses. I have clung  
 To nothing, lov'd a nothing, nothing seen  
 Or felt but a great dream! O I have been  
 Presumptuous against love, against the sky,  
 Against all elements, against the tie 640  
 Of mortals each to each, against the blooms  
 Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs  
 Of heroes gone! Against his proper glory  
 Has my own soul conspired: so my story  
 Will I to children utter, and repent.  
 There never liv'd a mortal man, who bent  
 His appetite beyond his natural sphere,  
 But starv'd and died. My sweetest Indian, here,  
 Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast  
 My life from too thin breathing: gone and past 650  
 Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone, farewell!  
 And air of visions, and the monstrous swell  
 Of visionary seas! No, never more  
 Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore  
 Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast.  
 Adieu, my daintiest Dream! although so vast  
 My love is still for thee. The hour may come  
 When we shall meet in pure elysium.  
 On earth I may not love thee; and therefore  
 Doves will I offer up, and sweetest store 660

All through the teeming year: so thou wilt shine  
 On me, and on this damsel fair of mine,  
 And bless our silver lives. My Indian bliss!  
 My river-lilly bud! one human kiss!  
 One sign of real breath—one gentle squeeze,  
 Warm as a dove's nest among summer trees,  
 And warm with dew at ooze from living blood!  
 Whither didst melt? Ah, what of that!—all good  
 We'll talk about—no more of dreaming.—Now,  
 Where shall our dwelling be? Under the brow 670  
 Of some steep mossy hill, where ivy dun  
 Would hide us up, although spring leaves were none;  
 And where dark yew trees, as we rustle through,  
 Will drop their scarlet berry cups of dew?  
 O thou wouldst joy to live in such a place;  
 Dusk for our loves, yet light enough to grace  
 Those gentle limbs on mossy bed reclin'd:  
 For by one step the blue sky shouldst thou find,  
 And by another, in deep dell below,  
 Sec, through the trees, a little river go 680  
 All in its mid-day gold and glimmering.  
 Honey from out the gnarled hive I'll bring,  
 And apples, wan with sweetness, gather thee,—  
 Cresses that grow where no man may them see,  
 And sorrel untorn by the dew-claw'd stag:  
 Pipes will I fashion of the syrinx flag,  
 That thou mayst always know whither I roam,  
 When it shall please thee in our quiet home  
 To listen and think of love. Still let me speak;  
 Still let me dive into the joy I seek.— 690  
 For yet the past doth prison me. The rill,  
 Thou haply mayst delight in, will I fill  
 With fairy fishes from the mountain tarn,  
 And thou shalt feed them from the squirrel's barn.  
 Its bottom will I strew with amber shells,  
 And pebbles blue from deep enchanted wells.  
 Its sides I'll plant with dew-sweet eglantine,  
 And honeysuckles full of clear bee-wine.  
 I will entice this crystal rill to trace  
 Love's silver name upon the meadow's face. 700  
 I'll kneel to Vesta, for a flame of fire;  
 And to god Phœbus, for a golden lyre;  
 To Empress Dian, for a hunting spear;  
 To Vesper, for a taper silver-clear,  
 That I may see thy beauty through the night;  
 To Flora, and a nightingale shall light

Tame on thy finger; to the River-gods,  
 And they shall bring thee taper fishing-rods  
 Of gold, and lines of Naiads' long bright tress.  
 Heaven shield thee for thine utter loveliness! 710  
 Thy mossy footstool shall the altar be  
 'Fore which I'll bend, bending, dear love, to thee:  
 Those lips shall be my Delphos, and shall speak  
 Laws to my footsteps, colour to my cheek,  
 Trembling or steadfastness to this same voice,  
 And of three sweetest pleasurings the choice:  
 And that affectionate light, those diamond things,  
 Those eyes, those passions, those supreme pearl springs,  
 Shall be my grief, or twinkle me to pleasure.  
 Say, is not bliss within our perfect seisure? 720  
 O that I could not doubt!"

The mountaineer .

Thus strove by fancies vain and crude to clear  
 His briar'd path to some tranquillity.  
 It gave bright gladness to his lady's eye,  
 And yet the tears she wept were tears of sorrow;  
 Answering thus, just as the golden morrow  
 Beam'd upward from the vallies of the east:  
 "O that the flutter of this heart had ceas'd,  
 Or the sweet name of love had pass'd away.  
 Young feather'd tyrant! by a swift decay 730  
 Wilt thou devote this body to the earth:  
 And I do think that at my very birth  
 I lisp'd thy blooming titles inwardly;  
 For at the first, first dawn and thought of thee,  
 With uplift hands I blest the stars of heaven.  
 Art thou not cruel? Ever have I striven  
 To think thee kind, but ah, it will not do!  
 When yet a child, I heard that kisses drew  
 Favour from thee, and so I kisses gave  
 To the void air, bidding them find out love: 740  
 But when I came to feel how far above  
 All fancy, pride, and fickle maidenhood,  
 All earthly pleasure, all imagin'd good,  
 Was the warm tremble of a devout kiss,—  
 Even then, that moment, at the thought of this,  
 Fainting I fell into a bed of flowers,  
 And languish'd there three days. Ye milder powers,  
 Am I not cruelly wrong'd? Believe, believe  
 Me, dear Endymion, were I to weave  
 With my own fancies garlands of sweet life, 750  
 Thou shouldst be one of all. Ah, bitter strife!

I may not be thy love: I am forbidden—  
 Indeed I am—thwarted, affrighted, chidden,  
 By things I trembled at, and gorgon wrath.  
 Twice hast thou ask'd whither I went: henceforth  
 Ask me no more! I may not utter it,  
 Nor may I be thy love. We might commit  
 Ourselves at once to vengeance; we might die;  
 We might embrace and die: voluptuous thought!  
 Enlarge not to my hunger, or I'm caught 760  
 In trammels of perverse deliciousness.  
 No, no, that shall not be: thee will I bless,  
 And bid a long adieu."

The Carian

No word return'd: both lovelorn, silent, wan,  
 Into the vallies green together went.  
 Far wandering, they were perforce content  
 To sit beneath a fair lone beechen tree;  
 Nor at each other gaz'd, but heavily  
 Por'd on its hazle cirque of shedded leaves.

Endymion! unhappy! it nigh grieves 770  
 Me to behold thee thus in last extreme:  
 Ensky'd ere this, but truly that I deem  
 Truth the best music in a first-born song.  
 Thy lute-voic'd brother will I sing ere long,  
 And thou shalt aid—hast thou not aided me?  
 Yes, moonlight Emperor! felicity  
 Has been thy meed for many thousand years;  
 Yet often have I, on the brink of tears,  
 Mourn'd as if yet thou wert a forester;—  
 Forgetting the old tale.

He did not stir

His eyes from the dead leaves, or one small pulse 780  
 Of joy he might have felt. The spirit culls  
 Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays  
 Through the old garden-ground of boyish days.  
 A little onward ran the very stream  
 By which he took his first soft poppy dream;  
 And on the very bark 'gainst which he leant  
 A crescent he had carv'd, and round it spent  
 His skill in little stars. The teeming tree  
 Had swollen and green'd the pious charactery, 790  
 But not ta'en out. Why, there was not a slope  
 Up which he had not fear'd the antelope;  
 And not a tree, beneath whose rooty shade  
 He had not with his tamed leopards play'd:

Nor could an arrow light, or javelin,  
Fly in the air where his had never been—  
And yet he knew it not.

O treachery!

Why does his lady smile, pleasing her eye  
With all his sorrowing? He sees her not.  
But who so stares on him? His sister sure!  
Peona of the woods!—Can she endure—  
Impossible—how dearly they embrace!  
His lady smiles; delight is in her face;  
It is no treachery.

800

“Dear brother mine!

Endymion, weep not so! Why shouldst thou pine  
When all great Latmos so exalt will be?

Thank the great gods, and look not bitterly;  
And speak not one pale word, and sigh no more.

Sure I will not believe thou hast such store  
Of grief, to last thee to my kiss again.

810

Thou surely canst not bear a mind in pain,  
Come hand in hand with one so beautiful.

Be happy both of you! for I will pull  
The flowers of autumn for your coronals.

Pan's holy priest for young Endymion calls;  
And when he is restor'd, thou, fairest dame,

Shalt be our queen. Now, is it not a shame  
To see ye thus,—not very, very sad?

Perhaps ye are too happy to be glad:

O feel as if it were a common day;

820

Free-voic'd as one who never was away.

No tongue shall ask, whence come ye? but ye shall

Be gods of your own rest imperial.

Not even I, for one whole month, will pry

Into the hours that have pass'd us by,

Since in my labour I did sing to thee.

O Hermes! on this very night will be

A hymning up to Cynthia, queen of light;

For the soothsayers old saw yesternight

Good visions in the air,—whence will befall,

830

As say these sages, health perpetual

To shepherds and their flocks; and furthermore,

In Dian's face they read the gentle lore:

Therefore for her these vesper-carols are.

Our friends will all be there from nigh and far.

Many upon thy death have ditties made;

And many, even now, their foreheads shade

With cypress, on a day of sacrifice.

New singing for our maids shalt thou devise,

And pluck the sorrow from our huntsmen's brows. 840  
 Tell me, my lady-queen, how to espouse  
 This wayward brother to his rightful joys!  
 His eyes are on thee bent, as thou didst poize  
 His fate most goddess-like. Help me, I pray,  
 To lure—Endymion, dear brother, say  
 What ails thee?" He could bear no more, and so  
 Bent his soul fiercely like a spiritual bow,  
 And twang'd it inwardly, and calmly said:  
 "I would have thee my only friend, sweet maid!  
 My only visitor! not ignorant though, 850  
 That those deceptions which for pleasure go  
 'Mong men, are pleasures real as real may be:  
 But there are higher ones I may not see,  
 If impiously an earthly realm I take.  
 Since I saw thee, I have been wide awake  
 Night after night, and day by day, until  
 Of the empyrean I have drunk my fill.  
 Let it content thee, Sister, seeing me  
 More happy than betides mortality.  
 A hermit young, I'll live in mossy cave, 860  
 Where thou alone shalt come to me, and lave  
 Thy spirit in the wonders I shall tell.  
 Through me the shepherd realm shall prosper well;  
 For to thy tongue will I all health confide.  
 And, for my sake, let this young maid abide  
 With thee as a dear sister. Thou alone,  
 Peona, mayst return to me. I own  
 This may sound strangely: but when, dearest girl,  
 Thou seest it for my happiness, no pearl  
 Will trespass down those cheeks. Companion fair! 870  
 Wilt be content to dwell with her, to share  
 This sister's love with me?" Like one resign'd  
 And bent by circumstance, and thereby blind  
 In self-commitment, thus that meek unknown:  
 "Aye, but a buzzing by my ears has flown,  
 Of jubilee to Dian:—truth I heard?  
 Well then, I see there is no little bird,  
 Tender soever, but is Jove's own care.  
 Long have I sought for rest, and, unaware,  
 Behold I find it! so exalted too! 880  
 So after my own heart! I knew, I knew  
 There was a place untenanted in it:  
 In that same void white Chastity shall sit,  
 And monitor me nightly to lone slumber.  
 With sanest lips I vow me to the number



Of Dian's sisterhood; and, kind lady,  
With thy good help, this very night shall see  
My future days to her fane consecrate."

As feels a dreamer what doth most create  
His own particular fright, so these three felt: 890  
Or like one who, in after ages, knelt  
To Lucifer or Baal, when he'd pine  
After a little sleep: or when in mine  
Far under-ground, a sleeper meets his friends  
Who know him not. Each diligently bends  
Towards common thoughts and things for very fear;  
Striving their ghastly malady to cheer,  
By thinking it a thing of yes and no,  
That housewives talk of. But the spirit-blow  
Was struck, and all were dreamers. At the last 900  
Endymion said: "Are not our fates all cast?  
Why stand we here? Adieu, ye tender pair!  
Adieu!" Whereat those maidens, with wild stare,  
Walk'd dizzily away. Pained and hot  
His eyes went after them, until they got  
Near to a cypress grove, whose deadly maw,  
In one swift moment, would what then he saw  
Engulph for ever. "Stay!" he cried, "ah, stay!  
Turn, damsels! hist! one word I have to say.  
Sweet Indian, I would see thee once again. 910  
It is a thing I dote on: so I'd fain,  
Peona, ye should hand in hand repair  
Into those holy groves, that silent are  
Behind great Dian's temple. I'll be yon,  
At vesper's earliest twinkle—they are gone—  
But once, once, once again—" At this he press'd  
His hands against his face, and then did rest  
His head upon a mossy hillock green,  
And so remain'd as he a corpse had been  
All the long day; save when he scantily lifted 920  
His eyes abroad, to see how shadows shifted  
With the slow move of time,—sluggish and weary  
Until the poplar tops, in journey dreary,  
Had reach'd the river's brim. Then up he rose,  
And, slowly as that very river flows,  
Walk'd towards the temple grove with this lament:  
"Why such a golden eve? The breeze is sent  
Careful and soft, that not a leaf may fall  
Before the serene father of them all  
Bows down his summer head below the west. 930  
Now am I of breath, speech, and speed possess,

But at the setting I must bid adieu  
 To her for the last time. Night will strew  
 On the damp grass myriads of lingering leaves,  
 And with them shall I die; nor much it grieves  
 To die, when summer dies on the cold sward.  
 Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord  
 Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies,  
 Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour roses;  
 My kingdom's at its death, and just it is 940  
 That I should die with it: so in all this  
 We miscall grief, bale, sorrow, heartbreak, woe.  
 What is there to plain of? By Titan's foe  
 I am but rightly serv'd." So saying, he  
 Tripp'd lightly on, in sort of deathful glee;  
 Laughing at the clear stream and setting sun,  
 As though they jests had been: nor had he done  
 His laugh at nature's holy countenance,  
 Until that grove appear'd, as if perchance,  
 And then his tongue with sober seemlihed 950  
 Gave utterance as he enter'd: "Ha! I said,  
 King of the butterflies; but by this gloom,  
 And by old Rhadamanthus' tongue of doom,  
 This dusk religion, pomp of solitude,  
 And the Promethean clay by thief endued,  
 By old Saturnus' forelock, by his head  
 Shook with eternal palsy, I did wed  
 Myself to things of light from infancy;  
 And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,  
 Is sure enough to make a mortal man 960  
 Grow impious." So he inwardly began  
 On things for which no wording can be found;  
 Deeper and deeper sinking, until drown'd  
 Beyond the reach of music: for the choir  
 Of Cynthia he heard not, though rough briar  
 Nor muffling thicket interpos'd to dull  
 The vesper hymn, far swollen, soft and full,  
 Through the dark pillars of those sylvan aisles.  
 He saw not the two maidens, nor their smiles,  
 Wan as primroses gather'd at midnight 970  
 By chilly finger'd spring. "Unhappy wight!  
 Endymion!" said Peona, "we are here!  
 What wouldst thou ere we all are laid on bier?"  
 Then he embrac'd her, and his lady's hand  
 Press'd, saying: "Sister, I would have command,  
 If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate."  
 At which that dark-eyed stranger stood elate

And said, in a new voice, but sweet as love,  
 To Endymion's amaze: "By Cupid's dove,  
 And so thou shalt! and by the lilly truth 980  
 Of my own breast thou shalt, beloved youth!"  
 And as she spake, into her face there came  
 Light, as reflected from a silver flame:  
 Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in display  
 Full golden; in her eyes a brighter day  
 Dawn'd blue and full of love. Aye, he beheld  
 Phœbe, his passion! joyous she upheld  
 Her lucid bow, continuing thus: "Drear, drear  
 Has our delaying been; but foolish fear 990  
 Withheld me first; and then decrees of fate;  
 And then 'twas fit that from this mortal state  
 Thou shouldst, my love, by some unlook'd for change  
 Be spiritualiz'd. Peona, we shall range  
 These forests, and to thee they safe shall be  
 As was thy cradle; hither shalt thou flee  
 To meet us many a time." Next Cynthia bright  
 Peona kiss'd, and bless'd with fair good night:  
 Her brother kiss'd her too, and knelt adown  
 Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon.  
 She gave her fair hands to him, and behold, 1000  
 Before three swiftest kisses he had told,  
 They vanish'd far away!—Peona went  
 Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment.

THE END



LAMIA,  
ISABELLA,  
THE EVE OF ST. AGNES,  
AND  
OTHER POEMS.

1820.

## ADVERTISEMENT

IF any apology be thought necessary for the appearance of the unfinished poem of *HYPERION*, the publishers beg to state that they alone are responsible, as it was printed at their particular request, and contrary to the wish of the author. The poem was intended to have been of equal length with *ENDYMION*, but the reception given to that work discouraged the author from proceeding.

FLEET STREET, *June 26*, 1820.

# LAMIA

## PART I

UPON a time, before the faery broods  
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,  
Before king Oberon's bright diadem,  
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,  
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns  
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslip'd lawns,  
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left  
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft:  
From high Olympus had he stolen light,  
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight 10  
Of his great summoner, and made retreat  
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.  
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt  
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt;  
At whose white feet the languid Tritons poured  
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.  
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,  
And in those meads where sometime she might haunt,  
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,  
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose. 20  
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet!  
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat  
Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,  
That from a whiteness, as the lilly clear,  
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair,  
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.

From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,  
Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,  
And wound with many a river to its head, 29  
To find where this sweet nymph prepar'd her secret bed:  
In vain; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,  
And so he rested, on the lonely ground,  
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies  
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.  
There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,  
Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys  
All pain but pity: thus the lone voice spake:  
"When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake!

"When move in a sweet body fit for life,  
 "And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife 40  
 "Of hearts and lips! Ah, miserable me!"  
 The God, dove-footed, glided silently  
 Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,  
 The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,  
 Until he found a palpitating snake,  
 Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,  
 Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;  
 Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,  
 Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd; 50  
 And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,  
 Dissolv'd, or brighter shone, or interwreathed  
 Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries—  
 So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,  
 She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady elf,  
 Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.  
 Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire  
 Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:  
 Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet! 59  
 She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete:  
 And for her eyes: what could such eyes do there  
 But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair?  
 As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air.  
 Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake  
 Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake,  
 And thus; while Hermes on his pinions lay,  
 Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey.

"Fair Hermes, crown'd with feathers, fluttering light,  
 "I had a splendid dream of thee last night:  
 "I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold, 70  
 "Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,  
 "The only sad one; for thou didst not hear  
 "The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chaunting clear,  
 "Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,  
 "Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious moan.  
 "I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,  
 "Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks,  
 "And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,  
 "Strike for the Cretan isle; and here thou art!  
 "Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid?"  
 Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd 81  
 His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired:



"Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high inspired!  
 "Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,  
 "Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,  
 "Telling me only where my nymph is fled,—  
 "Where she doth breathe!" "Bright planet, thou hast said,"  
 Return'd the snake, "but seal with oaths, fair God!"  
 "I swear," said Hermes, "by my serpent rod,  
 "And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown!" 90  
 Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms blown.  
 Then thus again the brilliance feminine:  
 "Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph of thine,  
 "Free as the air, invisibly, she strays  
 "About these thornless wilds; her pleasant days  
 "She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble feet  
 "Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet;  
 "From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches green,  
 "She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen:  
 "And by my power is her beauty veil'd 100  
 "To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd  
 "By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,  
 "Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.  
 "Pale grew her immortality, for woe  
 "Of all these lovers, and she grieved so  
 "I took compassion on her, bade her steep  
 "Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep  
 "Her loveliness invisible, yet free  
 "To wander as she loves, in liberty.  
 "Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone, 110  
 "If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon!"  
 Then, once again, the charmed God began  
 An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran  
 Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.  
 Ravish'd, she lifted her Circean head,  
 Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lisping said,  
 "I was a woman, let me have once more  
 "A woman's shape, and charming as before.  
 "I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!  
 "Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is.  
 "Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow, 121  
 "And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now."  
 The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,  
 She breath'd upon his eyes, and swift was seen  
 Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green.  
 It was no dream; or say a dream it was,  
 Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass

Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.  
 One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it might seem  
 Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd; 130  
 Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd  
 To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,  
 Delicate, put to proof the lythe Caducean charm.  
 So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent  
 Full of adoring tears and blandishment,  
 And towards her stept: she, like a moon in wane, •  
 Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain  
 Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower  
 That faints into itself at evening hour:  
 But the God fostering her chilled hand, 140  
 She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,  
 And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,  
 Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.  
 Into the green-recessed woods they flew;  
 Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

Left to herself, the serpent now began  
 To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,  
 Her mouth foam'd and the grass, therewith besprent,  
 Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent;  
 Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear, 150  
 Hot, glaz'd, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,  
 Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling tear.  
 The colours all inflam'd throughout her train,  
 She writh'd about, convulsed with scarlet pain:  
 A deep volcanic yellow took the place  
 Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;  
 And, as the lava ravishes the mead,  
 Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede;  
 Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,  
 Eclips'd her crescents, and lick'd up her stars: 160  
 So that, in moments few, she was undrest  
 Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,  
 And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,  
 Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.  
 Still shone her crown; that vanish'd, also she  
 Melted and disappear'd as suddenly;  
 And in the air, her new voice luting soft,  
 Cried, "Lycius! gentle Lycius!"—Borne aloft  
 With the bright mists about the mountains hoar  
 These words dissolv'd: Crete's forests heard no more.

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright, 171  
 A full-born beauty new and exquisite?

She fled into that valley they pass o'er  
 Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore;  
 And rested at the foot of those wild hills,  
 The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,  
 And of that other ridge whose barren back  
 Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,  
 South-westward to Cleone. There she stood  
 About a young bird's flutter from a wood, 180  
 Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,  
 By a clear pool, wherein she passioned  
 To see herself escap'd from so sore ills,  
 While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius!—for she was a maid  
 More beautiful than ever twisted braid,  
 Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flowered lea  
 Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy:  
 A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore 190  
 Of love deep learned to the red heart's core:  
 Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain  
 To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain;  
 Define their pettish limits, and estrange  
 Their points of contact, and swift counterchange;  
 Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart  
 Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art;  
 As though in Cupid's college she had spent  
 Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,  
 And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so faerily 200  
 By the wayside to linger, we shall see;  
 But first 'tis fit to tell how she could muse  
 And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,  
 Of all she list, strange or magnificent:  
 How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went;  
 Whether to faint Elysium, or where  
 Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair  
 Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair;  
 Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,  
 Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine; 210  
 Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine  
 Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.  
 And sometimes into cities she would send  
 Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend;  
 And once, while among mortals dreaming thus,  
 She saw the young Corinthian Lycius  
 Charioting foremost in the envious race,

Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,  
 And fell into a swooning love of him. 220  
 Now on the moth-time of that evening dim  
 He would return that way, as well she knew,  
 To Corinth from the shore; for freshly blew  
 The eastern soft wind, and his galley now  
 Grated the quaystones with her brazen prow  
 In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle  
 Fresh anchor'd; whither he had been awhile  
 To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there  
 Waits with high marble doors for blood and incense rare.  
 Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire;  
 For by some freakful chance he made retire 230  
 From his companions, and set forth to walk,  
 Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk:  
 Over the solitary hills he fared,  
 Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star appeared  
 His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,  
 In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.  
 Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near—  
 Close to her passing, in indifference drear,  
 His silent sandals swept the mossy green;  
 So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen 240  
 She stood: he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,  
 His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes  
 Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white  
 Turn'd—syllabling thus, "Ah, Lycius bright,  
 "And will you leave me on the hills alone?  
 "Lycius, look back! and be some pity shown."  
 He did; not with cold wonder fearingly,  
 But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice;  
 For so delicious were the words she sung,  
 It seem'd he had lov'd them a whole summer long: 250  
 And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,  
 Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,  
 And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid  
 Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid  
 Due adoration, thus began to adore;  
 Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure:  
 "Leave thee alone! Look back! Ah, Goddess, see  
 "Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee!  
 "For pity do not this sad heart belie—  
 "Even as thou vanishest so shall I die. 260  
 "Stay! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay!  
 "To thy far wishes will thy streams obey:  
 "Stay! though the greenest woods be thy domain,  
 "Alone they can drink up the morning rain:

"Though a descended Pleiad, will not one  
 "Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune  
 "Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine?  
 "So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine  
 "Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade  
 "Thy memory will waste me to a shade:— 270  
 "For pity do not melt!"—"If I should stay,"  
 Said Lamia, "here, upon this floor of clay,  
 "And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,  
 "What canst thou say or do of charm enough  
 "To dull the nice remembrance of my home?  
 "Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam  
 "Over these hills and vales, where no joy is,—  
 "Empty of immortality and bliss!  
 "Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know  
 "That finer spirits cannot breathe below 280  
 "In human climes, and live: Alas! poor youth,  
 "What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe  
 "My essence? What serener palaces,  
 "Where I may all my many senses please,  
 "And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts appease?  
 "It cannot be—Adieu!" So said, she rose  
 Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose  
 The amorous promise of her lone complain,  
 Swoon'd, murmuring of love, and pale with pain.  
 The cruel lady, without any show 290  
 Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,  
 But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,  
 With brighter eyes and slow amenity,  
 Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh  
 The life she had so tangled in her mesh:  
 And as he from one trance was wakening  
 Into another, she began to sing,  
 Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every thing,  
 A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,  
 While, like held breath, the stars drew in their panting fires.  
 And then she whisper'd in such trembling tone, 301  
 As those who, safe together met alone  
 For the first time through many anguish'd days,  
 Use other speech than looks; bidding him raise  
 His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt,  
 For that she was a woman, and without  
 Any more subtle fluid in her veins  
 Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains  
 Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.  
 And next she wonder'd how his eyes could miss 310

Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,  
 She dwelt but half retir'd, and there had led  
 Days happy as the gold coin could invent  
 Without the aid of love; yet in content  
 Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by,  
 Where 'gainst a column he lent thoughtfully  
 At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd  
 Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd  
 Late on that eve, as 'twas the night before  
 The Adonian feast; whereof she saw no more, 320  
 But wept alone those days, for why should she adore?  
 Lycius from death awoke into amaze,  
 To see her still, and singing so sweet lays;  
 Then from amaze into delight he fell  
 To hear her whisper woman's lore so well;  
 And every word she spake entic'd him on  
 To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.  
 Let the mad poets say whate'er they please  
 Of the sweets of Faeries, Peris, Goddesses,  
 There is not such a treat among them all, 330  
 Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,  
 As a real woman, lineal indeed  
 From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.  
 Thus gentle Lamia judg'd, and judg'd aright,  
 That Lycius could not love in half a fright,  
 So threw the goddess off, and won his heart  
 More pleasantly by playing woman's part,  
 With no more awe than what her beauty gave,  
 That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.  
 Lycius to all made eloquent reply, 340  
 Marrying to every word a twinborn sigh;  
 And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,  
 If 'twas too far that night for her soft feet.  
 The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness  
 Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease  
 To a few paces; not at all surmised  
 By blinded Lycius, so in her comprized.  
 They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,  
 So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all, 350  
 Throughout her palaces imperial,  
 And all her populous streets and temples lewd,  
 Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,  
 To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.  
 Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours,

Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,  
 Companion'd or alone; while many a light  
 Flared, here and there, from wealthy festivals,  
 And threw their moving shadows on the walls,  
 Or found them cluster'd in the corniced shade 360  
 Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,  
 Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near  
 With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald crown,  
 Slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic gown:  
 Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,  
 Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,  
 While hurried Lamia trembled: "Ah," said he,  
 "Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?  
 "Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew?"—  
 "I'm wearied," said fair Lamia: "tell me who 371  
 "Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind  
 "His features:—Lycius! wherefore did you blind  
 "Yourself from his quick eyes?" Lycius replied,  
 "'Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide  
 "And good instructor; but to-night he seems  
 "The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams."

While yet he spake they had arrived before  
 A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door.  
 Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow 381  
 Reflected in the slabbed steps below,  
 Mild as a star in water; for so new,  
 And so unsullied was the marble's hue,  
 So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,  
 Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine  
 Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds Æolian  
 Breath'd from the hinges, as the ample span  
 Of the wide doors disclos'd a place unknown  
 Some time to any, but these two alone,  
 And a few Persian mutes, who that same year 390  
 Were seen about the markets: none knew where  
 They could inhabit; the most curious  
 Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to their house:  
 And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,  
 For truth's sake, what woes afterwards befel,  
 'Twould humour many a heart to leave them thus,  
 Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.

## PART II

LOVE in a hut, with water and a crust,  
 Is—Love, forgive us!—cinders, ashes, dust;  
 Love in a palace is perhaps at last  
 More grievous torment than a hermit's fast:—  
 That is a doubtful tale from faery land,  
 Hard for the non-elect to understand.  
 Had Lycius liv'd to hand his story down,  
 He might have given the moral a fresh frown,  
 Or clench'd it quite: but too short was their bliss  
 To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss. 11  
 Beside, there, nightly, with terrific glare,  
 Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,  
 Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,  
 Above the lintel of their chamber door,  
 And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor.

For all this came a ruin: side by side  
 They were enthroned, in the even tide,  
 Upon a couch, near to a curtaining  
 Whose airy texture, from a golden string,  
 Floated into the room, and let appear 20  
 Unveild the summer heaven, blue and clear,  
 Betwixt two marble shafts:—there they reposed,  
 Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,  
 Saving a tythe which love still open kept,  
 That they might see each other while they almost slept;  
 When from the slope side of a suburb hill,  
 Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill  
 Of trumpets—Lycius started—the sounds fled,  
 But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.  
 For the first time, since first he harbour'd in 30  
 That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,  
 His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn  
 Into the noisy world almost forsworn.  
 The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,  
 Saw this with pain, so arguing a want  
 Of something more, more than her empery  
 Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh  
 Because he mused beyond her, knowing well  
 That but a moment's thought is passion's passing bell.  
 "Why do you sigh, fair creature?" whisper'd he:  
 "Why do you think?" return'd she tenderly: 41  
 "You have deserted me;—where am I now?  
 "Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow:



"No, no, you have dismiss'd me; and I go  
 "From your breast houseless: aye, it must be so."  
 He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,  
 Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,  
 "My silver planet, both of eve and morn!  
 "Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,  
 "While I am striving how to fill my heart 50  
 "With deeper crimson, and a double smart?  
 "How to entangle, trammel up and snare  
 "Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there  
 "Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?  
 "Aye, a sweet kiss—you see your mighty woes.  
 "My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen then!  
 "What mortal hath a prize, that other men  
 "May be confounded and abash'd withal,  
 "But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,  
 "And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice 60  
 "Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.  
 "Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,  
 "While through the thronged streets your bridal car  
 "Wheels round its dazzling spokes."—The lady's cheek  
 Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and meek,  
 Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain  
 Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain  
 Beseeking him, the while his hand she wrung,  
 To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,  
 Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim 70  
 Her wild and timid nature to his aim:  
 Besides, for all his love, in self despite,  
 Against his better self, he took delight  
 Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.  
 His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue  
 Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible  
 In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.  
 Fine was the mitigated fury, like  
 Apollo's presence when in act to strike  
 The serpent—Ha, the serpent! certes, she 80  
 Was none. She burnt, she lov'd the tyranny,  
 And, all subdued, consented to the hour  
 When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.  
 Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,  
 "Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my truth,  
 "I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee  
 "Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,  
 "As still I do. Hast any mortal name,  
 "Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?

"Or friends or kinsfolk on the citted earth, 90  
 "To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth?"  
 "I have no friends," said Lamia, "no, not one;  
 "My presence in wide Corinth hardly known:  
 "My parents' bones are in their dusty urns  
 "Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns,  
 "Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,  
 "And I neglect the holy rite for thee.  
 "Even as you list invite your many guests;  
 "But if, as now it seems, your vision rests  
 "With any pleasure on me, do not bid 100  
 "Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid."  
 Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,  
 Made close inquiry; from whose touch she shrank,  
 Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade  
 Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd.

It was the custom then to bring away  
 The bride from home at blushing shut of day,  
 Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along  
 By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song,  
 With other pageants: but this fair unknown 110  
 Had not a friend. So being left alone,  
 (Lycius was gone to summon all his kin)  
 And knowing surely she could never win  
 His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,  
 She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress  
 The misery in fit magnificence.  
 She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and whence  
 Came, and who were her subtle servitors.  
 About the halls, and to and from the doors,  
 There was a noise of wings, till in short space 120  
 The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched grace.  
 A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone  
 Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan  
 Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.  
 Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade  
 Of palm and plantain, met from either side,  
 High in the midst, in honour of the bride:  
 Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,  
 From either side their stems branch'd one to one  
 All down the aisled place; and beneath all 130  
 There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to wall.  
 So canopied, lay an untasted feast  
 Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,  
 Silently paced about, and as she went,  
 In pale contented sort of discontent,

Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich  
 The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.  
 Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at first,  
 Came jasper pannels; then, anon, there burst  
 Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees, 140  
 And with the larger wove in small intricacies.  
 Approving all, she faded at self-will,  
 And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd and still,  
 Complete and ready for the revels rude,  
 When dreadful guests would come to spoil her solitude.

The day appear'd, and all the gossip rout.  
 O senseless Lycius! Madman! wherefore flout  
 The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd hours,  
 And show to common eyes these secret bowers?  
 The herd approach'd; each guest, with busy brain.  
 Arriving at the portal, gaz'd amain, 151  
 And enter'd marveling: for they knew the street,  
 Remember'd it from childhood all complete  
 Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen  
 That royal porch, that high-built fair demesne;  
 So in they hurried all, maz'd, curious and keen:  
 Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,  
 And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere;  
 'Twas Apollonius: something too he laugh'd,  
 As though some knotty problem, that had daft 160  
 His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,  
 And solve and melt:—'twas just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule  
 His young disciple. "'Tis no common rule,  
 Lycius," said he, "for uninvited guest  
 "To force himself upon you, and infest  
 "With an unbidden presence the bright throng  
 "Of younger friends; yet must I do this wrong,  
 "And you forgive me." Lycius blush'd, and led  
 The old man through the inner doors broad-spread;  
 With reconciling words and courteous mien 171  
 Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,  
 Fill'd with pervading brilliance and perfume:  
 Before each lucid pannel fuming stood  
 A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,  
 Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,  
 Whose slender feet wide-swerv'd upon the soft

Wool-woofed carpets: fifty wreaths of smoke  
 From fifty censers their light voyage took 180  
 To the high roof, still mimick'd as they rose  
 Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds odorous.  
 Twelve sphered tables, by silk seats insphered,  
 High as the level of a man's breast rear'd  
 On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold  
 Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told  
 Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine  
 Come from the gloomy tun with merry shine.  
 Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,  
 Each shrining in the midst the image of a God. 190

When in an antichamber every guest  
 Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press'd,  
 By minist'ring slaves, upon his hands and feet,  
 And fragrant oils with ceremony meet  
 Pour'd on his hair, they all mov'd to the feast  
 In white robes, and themselves in order placed  
 Around the silken couches, wondering  
 Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth could spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,  
 While fluent Greek a vowel'd undersong 200  
 Kept up among the guests, discoursing low  
 At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow;  
 But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains,  
 Louder they talk, and louder come the strains  
 Of powerful instruments:—the gorgeous dyes,  
 The space, the splendour of the draperies,  
 The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,  
 Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,  
 Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,  
 And every soul from human trammels freed, 210  
 No more so strange; for merry wine, sweet wine,  
 Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too divine.  
 Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height;  
 Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double bright:  
 Garlands of every green, and every scent  
 From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees branch-rent,  
 In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought  
 High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought  
 Of every guest; that each, as he did please,  
 Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease. 220

What wreath for Lamia? What for Lycius?  
 What for the sage, old Apollonius?

Upon her aching forehead be there hung  
 The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue;  
 And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him  
 The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim  
 Into forgetfulness; and, for the sage,  
 Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage  
 War on his temples. Do not all charms fly  
 At the mere touch of cold philosophy?  
 There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:  
 We know her woof, her texture; she is given  
 In the dull catalogue of common things.  
 Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,  
 Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,  
 Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—  
 Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made  
 The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

230

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,  
 Scarce saw in all the room another face,  
 Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took  
 Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a look  
 'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance  
 From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,  
 And pledge him. The bald-head philosopher  
 Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or stir  
 Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,  
 Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling her sweet pride.  
 Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,  
 As pale it lay upon the rosy couch:  
 'Twas icy, and the cold ran through his veins;  
 Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains  
 Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.  
 "Lamia, what means this? Wherefore dost thou start?  
 "Know'st thou that man?" Poor Lamia answer'd not.  
 He gaz'd into her eyes, and not a jot  
 Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal:  
 More, more he gaz'd: his human senses reel:  
 Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs;  
 There was no recognition in those orbs.  
 "Lamia!" he cried—and no soft-toned reply.  
 The many heard, and the loud revelry  
 Grew hush; the stately music no more breathes;  
 The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.  
 By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased;  
 A deadly silence step by step increased,  
 Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,  
 And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.

240

250

260

"Lamia!" he shriek'd; and nothing but the shriek  
 With its sad echo did the silence break. 270  
 "Begone, foul dream!" he cried, gazing again  
 In the bride's face, where now no azure vein  
 Wander'd on fair-spaced temples; no soft bloom  
 Misted the cheek; no passion to illumine  
 The deep-recessed vision:—all was blight;  
 Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.  
 "Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man!  
 "Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous ban  
 "Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images  
 "Here represent their shadowy presences, 280  
 "May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn  
 "Of painful blindness; leaving thee forlorn,  
 "In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright  
 "Of conscience, for their long offended might,  
 "For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries,  
 "Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.  
 "Corinthians! look upon that grey-beard wretch!  
 "Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch  
 "Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!  
 "My sweet bride withers at their potency." 290  
 "Fool!" said the sophist, in an under-tone  
 Gruff with contempt; which a death-nighing moan  
 From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,  
 He sank supine beside the aching ghost.  
 "Fool! Fool!" repeated he, while his eyes still  
 Relented not, nor mov'd; "from every ill  
 "Of life have I preserv'd thee to this day,  
 "And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?"  
 Then Lamia breath'd death breath; the sophist's eye,  
 Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly, 300  
 Keen, cruel, perçant, stinging: she, as well  
 As her weak hand could any meaning tell,  
 Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,  
 He look'd and look'd again a level—No!  
 "A serpent!" echoed he; no sooner said,  
 Than with a frightful scream she vanished:  
 And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,  
 As were his limbs of life, from that same night.  
 On the high couch he lay!—his friends came round—  
 Supported him—no pulse, or breath they found, 310  
 And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.

ISABELLA;  
OR  
THE POT OF BASIL  
*A Story from Boccaccio*

I

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel!  
Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye!  
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell  
Without some stir of heart, some malady;  
They could not sit at meals but feel how well  
It soothed each to be the other by;  
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep  
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

II

With every morn their love grew tenderer,  
With every eve deeper and tenderer still;  
He might not in house, field, or garden stir,  
But her full shape would all his seeing fill;  
And his continual voice was pleasanter  
To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill;  
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,  
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

III

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch  
Before the door had given her to his eyes;  
And from her chamber-window he would catch  
Her beauty farther than the falcon spies;  
And constant as her vespers would he watch,  
Because her face was turn'd to the same skies;  
And with sick longing all the night outwear,  
To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

IV

A whole long month of May in this sad plight  
Made their cheeks paler by the break of June:  
"To-morrow will I bow to my delight,  
"To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon."—

## K E A T S

"O may I never see another night,  
 "Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune." —  
 So spake they to their pillows; but, alas,  
 Honeyless days and days did he let pass;

## V

Until sweet Isabella's untouched cheek  
 Fell sick within the rose's just domain,  
 Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek  
 By every lull to cool her infant's pain:  
 "How ill she is," said he, "I may not speak,  
 "And yet I will, and tell my love all plain:  
 "If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,  
 "And at the least 'twill startle off her cares."

## VI

So said he one fair morning, and all day  
 His heart beat awfully against his side;  
 And to his heart he inwardly did pray  
 For power to speak; but still the ruddy tide  
 Stifled his voice, and puls'd resolve away—  
 Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,  
 Yet brought him to the meekness of a child:  
 Alas! when passion is both meek and wild!

## VII

So once more he had wak'd and anguished  
 A dreary night of love and misery,  
 If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed  
 To every symbol on his forehead high;  
 She saw it waxing very pale and dead,  
 And straight all flush'd; so, lisped tenderly,  
 "Lorenzo!"—here she ceas'd her timid quest,  
 But in her tone and look he read the rest.

## VIII

"O Isabella, I can half perceive  
 "That I may speak my grief into thine ear;  
 "If thou didst ever anything believe,  
 "Believe how I love thee, believe how near  
 "My soul is to its doom: I would not grieve  
 "Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear  
 "Thine eyes by gazing; but I cannot live  
 "Another night, and not my passion shrive.



## IX

"Love! thou art leading me from wintry cold,  
"Lady! thou ledest me to summer clime,  
"And I must taste the blossoms that unfold  
"In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time."<sup>1</sup>  
So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,  
And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme:  
Great bliss was with them, and great happiness  
Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

## X

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,  
Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart  
Only to meet again more close, and share  
The inward fragrance of each other's heart.  
She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair  
Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart;  
He with light steps went up a western hill,  
And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill.

## XI

All close they met again, before the dusk  
Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,  
All close they met, all eves, before the dusk  
Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,  
Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,  
Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.  
Ah! better had it been for ever so,  
Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

## XII

Were they unhappy then?—It cannot be—  
Too many tears for lovers have been shed,  
Too many sighs give we to them in fee,  
Too much of pity after they are dead,  
Too many doleful stories do we see,  
Whose matter in bright gold were best be read;  
Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse  
Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

## XIII

But, for the general award of love,  
The little sweet doth kill much bitterness;  
Though Dido silent is in under-grove,  
And Isabella's was a great distress,

Though Young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove  
 Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less—  
 Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,  
 Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

## XIV

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,  
 Enriched from ancestral merchandize,  
 And for them many a weary hand did swelt  
 In torched mines and noisy factories  
 And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt  
 In blood from stinging whip;—with hollow eyes  
 Many all day in dazzling river stood,  
 To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

## XV

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,  
 And went all naked to the hungry shark;  
 For them his ears gush'd blood; for them in death  
 The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark  
 Lay full of darts; for them alone did seethe  
 A thousand men in troubles wide and dark:  
 Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,  
 That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

## XVI

Why were they proud? Because their marble founts  
 Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears?—  
 Why were they proud? Because fair orange-mounts  
 Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs?—  
 Why were they proud? Because red-lin'd accounts  
 Were richer than the songs of Grecian years?—  
 Why were they proud? again we ask aloud,  
 Why in the name of Glory were they proud?

## XVII

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired  
 In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,  
 As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,  
 Paled in and vineyarded from beggar-spies;  
 The hawks of ship-mast forests—the untired  
 And pannier'd mules for ducats and old lies—  
 Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away,—  
 Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

## XVIII

How was it these same ledger-men could spy  
Fair Isabella in her downy nest?  
How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye  
A straying from his toil? Hot Egypt's pest  
Into their vision covetous and sly!  
How could these money-bags see east and west?—  
Yet so they did—and every dealer fair  
Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

## XIX

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio!  
Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,  
And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,  
And of thy roses amorous of the moon,  
And of thy lillies, that do paler grow  
Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune,  
For venturing syllables that ill beseem  
The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

## XX

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale  
Shall move on soberly, as it is meet;  
There is no other crime, no mad assail  
To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet:  
But it is done—succeed the verse or fail—  
To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet;  
To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,  
An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

## XXI

These brethren having found by many signs  
What love Lorenzo for their sister had,  
And how she lov'd him too, each unconfines  
His bitter thoughts to other, well nigh mad  
That he, the servant of their trade designs,  
Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,  
When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees  
To some high noble and his olive-trees.

## XXII

And many a jealous conference had they,  
And many times they bit their lips alone,  
Before they fix'd upon a surest way  
To make the youngster for his crime atone;

And at the last, these men of cruel clay  
 Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone;  
 For they resolved in some forest dim  
 To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

## XXIII

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant  
 Into the sun-rise, o'er the balustrade  
 Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent  
 Their footing through the dews; and to him said,  
 "You seem there in the quiet of content,  
 "Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade  
 "Calm speculation; but if you are wise,  
 "Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

## XXIV

"To-day we purpose, aye, this hour we mount  
 "To spur three leagues towards the Apennine;  
 "Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count  
 "His dewy rosary on the eglantine."  
 Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,  
 Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents' whine;  
 And went in haste, to get in readiness,  
 With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman's dress.

## XXV

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,  
 Each third step did he pause, and listen'd oft  
 If he could hear his lady's matin-song,  
 Or the light whisper of her footstep soft;  
 And as he thus over his passion hung,  
 He heard a laugh full musical aloft;  
 When, looking up, he saw her features bright  
 Smile through an in-door lattice, all delight.

## XXVI

"Love, Isabel!" said he, "I was in pain  
 "Lest I should miss to bid thee a good morrow:  
 "Ah! what if I should lose thee, when so fain  
 "I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow  
 "Of a poor three hours' absence? but we'll gain  
 "Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.  
 "Good bye! I'll soon be back."—"Good bye!" said she:—  
 And as he went she chanted merrily.

## XXVII

So the two brothers and their murder'd man  
Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream  
Gurgles through straiten'd banks, and still doth fan  
Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream  
Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan  
The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,  
Lorenzo's flush with love.—They pass'd the water  
Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

## XXVIII

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,  
There in that forest did his great love cease;  
Ah! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,  
It aches in loneliness—is ill at peace  
As the break-covert blood-hounds of such sin:  
They dipp'd their swords in the water, and did tease  
Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,  
Each richer by his being a murderer.

## XXIX

They told their sister how, with sudden speed,  
Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,  
Because of some great urgency and need  
In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.  
Poor Girl! put on thy stifling widow's weed,  
And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands;  
To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,  
And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

## XXX

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be;  
Sorely she wept until the night came on,  
And then, instead of love, O misery!  
She brooded o'er the luxury alone:  
His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,  
And to the silence made a gentle moan,  
Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,  
And on her couch low murmuring "Where? O where?"

## XXXI

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long  
Its fiery vigil in her single breast;  
She fretted for the golden hour, and hung  
Upon the time with feverish unrest—

## K E A T S

Not long—for soon into her heart a throng  
 Of higher occupants, a richer zest,  
 Came tragic; passion not to be subdued,  
 And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

## XXXII

In the mid days of autumn, on their eves  
 The breath of Winter comes from far away,  
 And the sick west continually bereaves  
 Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay  
 Of death among the bushes and the leaves,  
 To make all bare before he dares to stray  
 From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel  
 By gradual decay from beauty fell,

## XXXIII

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes  
 She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all pale,  
 Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes  
 Could keep him off so long? They spake a tale  
 Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes  
 Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale;  
 And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud,  
 To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

## XXXIV

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,  
 But for a thing more deadly dark than all;  
 It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,  
 Which saves a sick man from the feather'd pall  
 For some few gasping moments; like a lance,  
 Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall  
 With cruel pierce, and bringing him again  
 Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

## XXXV

It was a vision.—In the drowsy gloom,  
 The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot  
 Lorenzo stood, and wept: the forest tomb  
 Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot  
 Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom  
 Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute  
 From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears  
 Had made a miry channel for his tears.

## XXXVI

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake;  
For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,  
To speak as when on earth it was awake,  
And Isabella on its music hung:  
Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,  
As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung;  
And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,  
Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

## XXXVII

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright  
With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof  
From the poor girl by magic of their light,  
The while it did unthread the horrid woof  
Of the late darken'd time,—the murderous spite  
Of pride and avarice,—the dark pine roof  
In the forest,—and the sodden turfed dell,  
Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.

## XXXVIII

Saying moreover, "Isabel, my sweet!  
"Red whortle-berries droop above my head,  
"And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet;  
"Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed  
"Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheep-fold bleat  
"Comes from beyond the river to my bed:  
"Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,  
"And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

## XXXIX

"I am a shadow now, alas! alas!  
"Upon the skirts of human-nature dwelling  
"Alone: I chant alone the holy mass,  
"While little sounds of life are round me knelling,  
"And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,  
"And many a chapel bell the hour is telling,  
"Paining me through: those sounds grow strange to me,  
"And thou art distant in Humanity.

## XL

"I know what was, I feel full well what is,  
"And I should rage, if spirits could go mad;  
"Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,  
"That paleness warms my grave, as though I had

"A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss  
 "To be my spouse: thy paleness makes me glad;  
 "Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel  
 "A greater love through all my essence steal."

## XLI

The Spirit mourn'd "Adieu!"—dissolv'd and left  
 The atom darkness in a slow turmoil;  
 As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,  
 Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,  
 We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,  
 And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil:  
 It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,  
 And in the dawn she started up awake;

## XLII

"Ha! ha!" said she, "I knew not this hard life,  
 "I thought the worst was simple misery;  
 "I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife  
 "Portion'd us—happy days, or else to die;  
 "But there is crime—a brother's bloody knife!  
 "Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy:  
 "I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,  
 "And greet thee morn and even in the skies."

## XLIII

When the full morning came, she had devised  
 How she might secret to the forest hie;  
 How she might find the clay, so dearly prized,  
 And sing to it one latest lullaby;  
 How her short absence might be unsurmised,  
 While she the inmost of the dream would try.  
 Resolv'd, she took with her an aged nurse,  
 And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

## XLIV

See, as they creep along the river side,  
 How she doth whisper to that aged Dame,  
 And, after looking round the champaign wide,  
 Shows her a knife.—"What feverous hectic flame  
 Burns in thee, child?—What good can thee betide,  
 "That thou should'st smile again?"—The evening came,  
 And they had found Lorenzo's earthy bed;  
 The flint was there, the berries at his head.



## XLV

Who hath not loiter'd in a green church-yard,  
And let his spirit, like a demon-mole,  
Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,  
To see scull, coffin'd bones, and funeral stole;  
Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr'd,  
And filling it once more with human soul?  
Ah! this is holiday to what was felt  
When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt.

## XLVI

She gaz'd into the fresh-thrown mould, as though  
One glance did fully all its secrets tell;  
Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know  
Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well;  
Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to grow,  
Like to a native lilly of the dell:  
Then with her knife, all sudden, she began  
To dig more fervently than misers can.

## XLVII

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon  
Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies,  
She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,  
And put it in her bosom, where it dries  
And freezes utterly unto the bone  
Those dainties made to still an infant's cries:  
Then 'gan she work again; nor stay'd her care,  
But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

## XLVIII

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,  
Until her heart felt pity to the core  
At sight of such a dismal labouring,  
And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar,  
And put her lean hands to the horrid thing:  
Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore;  
At last they felt the kernel of the grave,  
And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

## XLIX

Ah! wherefore all this wormy circumstance?  
Why linger at the yawning tomb so long?  
O for the gentleness of old Romance,  
The simple plainning of a minstrel's song!

Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,  
 For here, in truth, it doth not well belong  
 To speak:—O turn thee to the very tale,  
 And taste the music of that vision pale.

## L

With duller steel than the Persean sword  
 They cut away no formless monster's head,  
 But one, whose gentleness did well accord  
 With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,  
 Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord:  
 If Love impersonate was ever dead,  
 Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.  
 'Twas love; cold,—dead indeed, but not dethroned.

## LI

In anxious secrecy they took it home,  
 And then the prize was all for Isabel:  
 She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,  
 And all around each eye's sepuchral cell  
 Pointed each fringed lash; the smeared loam  
 With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,  
 She drench'd away:—and still she comb'd, and kept  
 Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd, and wept.

## LII

Then in a silken scarf,—sweet with the dews  
 Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,  
 And divine liquids come with odorous ooze  
 Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully,—  
 She wrapp'd it up; and for its tomb did choose  
 A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,  
 And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set  
 Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

## LIII

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,  
 And she forgot the blue above the trees,  
 And she forgot the dells where waters run,  
 And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze;  
 She had no knowledge when the day was done,  
 And the new morn she saw not: but in peace  
 Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,  
 And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

## LIV

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,  
 Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,  
 So that it smelt more balmy than its peers  
 Of Basil-tufts in Florence; for it drew  
 Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,  
 From the fast mouldering head there shut from view:  
 So that the jewel, safely casketed,  
 Came forth, and in perfumed leafits spread.

## LV

O Melancholy, linger here awhile!  
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!  
 O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,  
 Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh!  
 Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile;  
 Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,  
 And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,  
 Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs.

## LVI

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,  
 From the deep throat of sad Melpomenel  
 Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,  
 And touch the strings into a mystery;  
 Sound mournfully upon the winds and low;  
 For simple Isabel is soon to be  
 Among the dead: She withers, like a palm  
 Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

## LVII

O leave the palm to wither by itself;  
 Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour!—  
 It may not be—those B  alites of pelf,  
 Her brethren, noted the continual shower  
 From her dead eyes; and many a curious elf,  
 Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower  
 Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside  
 By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

## LVIII

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd much  
 Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,  
 And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch;  
 Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might mean:

## K E A T S

They could not surely give belief, that such  
 A very nothing would have power to wean  
 Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,  
 And even remembrance of her love's delay.

## LIX

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift  
 This hidden whim; and long they watch'd in vain;  
 For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,  
 And seldom felt she any hunger-pain;  
 And when she left, she hurried back, as swift  
 As bird on wing to breast its eggs again;  
 And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there  
 Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

## LX

Yet they contriv'd to steal the Basil-pot,  
 And to examine it in secret place;  
 The thing was vile with green and livid spot,  
 And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face:  
 The guerdon of their murder they had got,  
 And so left Florence in a moment's space,  
 Never to turn again.—Away they went,  
 With blood upon their heads, to banishment.

## LXI

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away!  
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!  
 O Echo, Echo, on some other day,  
 From isles Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh!  
 Spirits of grief, sing not your "Well-a-way!"  
 For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die;  
 Will die a death too lone and incomplete,  
 Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

## LXII

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,  
 Asking for her lost Basil amorously;  
 And with melodious chuckle in the strings  
 Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry  
 After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,  
 To ask him where her Basil was; and why  
 'Twas hid from her: "For cruel 'tis," said she,  
 "To steal my Basil-pot away from me."

## LXIII

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,  
Imploring for her Basil to the last.  
No heart was there in Florence but did mourn  
In pity of her love, so overcast.  
And a sad ditty of this story born  
From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd:  
Still is the burthen sung—"O cruelty,  
"To steal my Basil-pot away from me!"

## THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

### I

Sr. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!  
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;  
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,  
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:  
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told  
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense from a censer old,  
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,  
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

### II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;  
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,  
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,  
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:  
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,  
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:  
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,  
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails  
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

### III

Northward he turneth through a little door,  
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue  
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;  
But no—already had his deathbell rung:  
The joys of all his life were said and sung:  
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:  
Another way he went, and soon among  
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,  
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

### IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;  
And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,  
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,  
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:

The level chambers, ready with their pride,  
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:  
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,  
Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,  
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

## V

At length burst in the argent revelry,  
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,  
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily  
The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay  
Of old romance. These let us wish away,  
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,  
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,  
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,  
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

## VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,  
Young virgins might have visions of delight,  
And soft adorings from their loves receive  
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,  
If ceremonies due they did aright;  
As, supperless to bed they must retire,  
And couch supine their beauties, lilly white;  
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require  
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

## VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:  
The music, yearning like a God in pain,  
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,  
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train  
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain  
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,  
And back retir'd; not cool'd by high disdain,  
But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere:  
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

## VIII

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,  
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:  
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs  
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort

## K E A T S

Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;  
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,  
 Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amorn,  
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,  
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

## IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,  
 She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,  
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire  
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,  
 Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores  
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,  
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,  
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen;  
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things  
 have been.

## X

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:  
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords  
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:  
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,  
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,  
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl  
 Against his lineage: not one breast affords  
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,  
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

## XI

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,  
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,  
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,  
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond  
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland:  
 He startled her; but soon she knew his face,  
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,  
 Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place:  
 "They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

## XII

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;  
 "He had a fever late, and in the fit  
 "He cursed thee and thine, both house and land:  
 "Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit



"More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!  
 "Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip dear,  
 "We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,  
 "And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here, not here;  
 "Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

## XIII

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,  
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,  
 And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-day!"  
 He found him in a little moonlight room,  
 Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.  
 "Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,  
 "O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom  
 "Which none but secret sisterhood may see,  
 "When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

## XIV

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—  
 "Yet men will murder upon holy days:  
 "Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,  
 "And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,  
 "To venture so: it fills me with amaze  
 "To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!  
 "God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays  
 "This very night: good angels her deceive!  
 "But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

## XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,  
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,  
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone  
 Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-book,  
 As spectacl'd she sits in chimney nook.  
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told  
 His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook  
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,  
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

## XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,  
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart  
 Made purple riot: then doth he propose  
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:

"A cruel man and impious thou art:  
 "Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream  
 "Alone with her good angels, far apart  
 "From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem  
 "Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

## XVII

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"  
 Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace  
 "When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,  
 "If one of her soft ringlets I displace,  
 "Or look with ruffian passion in her face:  
 "Good Angela, believe me by these tears;  
 "Or I will, even in a moment's space,  
 "Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,  
 "And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves  
 and bears."

## XVIII

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?  
 "A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,  
 "Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;  
 "Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,  
 "Were never miss'd."—Thus plaining, doth she bring  
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;  
 So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,  
 That Angela gives promise she will do  
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

## XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,  
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide  
 Him in a closet, of such privacy  
 That he might see her beauty unespied,  
 And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,  
 While legion'd faeries pac'd the coverlet,  
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.  
 Never on such a night have lovers met,  
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

## XX

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:  
 "All cates and dainties shall be stored there  
 "Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame  
 "Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,

"For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare  
"On such a catering trust my dizzy head.  
"Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer  
"The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,  
"Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

## XXI

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.  
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;  
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear  
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast  
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,  
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain  
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste;  
Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.  
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

## XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,  
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,  
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,  
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:  
With silver taper's light, and pious care,  
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led  
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,  
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;  
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

## XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;  
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:  
She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin  
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:  
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!  
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,  
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;  
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell  
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

## XXIV

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,  
All garlanded with carven imag'ries  
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,  
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,

Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;  
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,  
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,  
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

## XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;  
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,  
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,  
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:  
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,  
 Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:  
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

## XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,  
 Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;  
 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;  
 Loosens her fragrant boddy; by degrees  
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:  
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,  
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,  
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,  
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

## XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,  
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,  
 Until the popped warmth of sleep oppress'd  
 Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;  
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;  
 Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;  
 Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;  
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

## XXVIII

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,  
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,  
 And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced  
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness;

Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,  
And breath'd himself: then from the closet crept,  
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,  
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,  
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast she slept.

## XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon  
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set  
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon  
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—  
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!  
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,  
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,  
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—  
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

## XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,  
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,  
While he from forth the closet brought a heap  
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;  
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;  
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd  
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,  
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

## XXXI

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand  
On golden dishes and in baskets bright  
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand  
In the retired quiet of the night,  
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—  
“And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!  
“Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:  
“Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,  
“Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.”

## XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm  
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream  
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm  
Impossible to melt as iced stream:

## K E A T S

The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;  
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:  
 It seem'd he never, never could redeem  
 From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes;  
 So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

### XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—  
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,  
 He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,  
 In Provence call'd, "La belle dame sans mercy:"  
 Close to her ear touching the melody;—  
 Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:  
 He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly  
 Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:  
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

### XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,  
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:  
 There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd  
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep  
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,  
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;  
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;  
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,  
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

### XXXV

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now  
 "Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,  
 "Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;  
 "And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:  
 "How chang'd thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!  
 "Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,  
 "Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!  
 "Oh, leave me not in this eternal woe,  
 "For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

### XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far  
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,  
 Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star  
 Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;

Into her dream he melted, as the rose  
 Blendeth its odour with the violet,—  
 Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows  
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet  
 Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

## XXXVII

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:  
 "This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"  
 'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:  
 "No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!  
 "Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—  
 "Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?  
 "I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,  
 "Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—  
 "A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

## XXXVIII

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!  
 "Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?  
 "Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil dyed?  
 "Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest  
 "After so many hours of toil and quest,  
 "A famish'd pilgrim,—sav'd by miracle.  
 "Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest  
 "Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well  
 "To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

## XXXIX

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,  
 "Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:  
 "Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—  
 "The bloated wassaillers will never heed:—  
 "Let us away, my love, with happy speed;  
 "There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—  
 "Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:  
 "Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,  
 "For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

## XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,  
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,  
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—  
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—

In all the house was heard no human sound.  
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;  
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,  
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;  
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

## XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;  
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;  
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,  
With a huge empty flaggon by his side:  
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,  
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:  
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide;—  
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;—  
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

## XLII

And they are gone: aye, ages long ago  
These lovers fled away into the storm.  
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,  
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form  
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,  
Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old  
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform;  
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,  
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.



## POEMS

### ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

#### I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains ·  
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains ·  
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,  
But being too happy in thine happiness,—  
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,  
In some melodious plot  
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

#### II

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been ·  
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
Tasting of Flora and the country green,  
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!  
O for a beaker full of the warm South,  
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
And purple-stained mouth;  
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

#### III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget ·  
What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret ·  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow,  
And leaden-eyed despairs,  
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

## IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,  
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:  
 Already with thee! tender is the night,  
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;  
 But here there is no light,  
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown -  
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

## V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
 But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet  
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
 Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;  
 And mid-May's eldest child,  
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

## VI

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time  
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,  
 To take into the air my quiet breath;  
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
 In such an ecstasy!  
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—  
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

## VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
 No hungry generations tread thee down;  
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
 In ancient days by emperor and clown:  
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
 The same that oft-times hath

Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

## VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell\*  
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well\*  
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.  
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades\*  
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep;  
In the next valley-glades:  
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

## ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

## I

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,  
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?  
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

## II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;  
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

## III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
For ever piping songs for ever new;

More happy love! more happy, happy love!  
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,  
 For ever panting, and for ever young;  
 All breathing human passion far above,  
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,  
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

## IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?  
 What little town by river or sea shore,  
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?  
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell  
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

## V

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede  
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;  
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought  
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!  
 When old age shall this generation waste,  
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all  
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

## ODE TO PSYCHE

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung  
 By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,  
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung  
 Even into thine own soft-conched ear:  
 Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see  
 The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?  
 I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,  
 And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,  
 Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side  
 In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof  
 Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran  
 A brooklet, scarce espied:

'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,  
 Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,  
 They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass;  
 Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;  
 Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,  
 As if disjointed by soft-handed slumber,  
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber  
 At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love: 20  
 The winged boy I knew;  
 But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?  
 His Psyche true!

O latest born and loveliest vision far  
 Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!  
 Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,  
 Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;  
 Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,  
 Nor altar heap'd with flowers;  
 Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan 30  
 Upon the midnight hours;  
 No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet  
 From chain-swung censer teeming;  
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat  
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,  
 Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,  
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,  
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire;  
 Yet even in these days so far retir'd 40  
 From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,  
 Fluttering among the faint Olympians,  
 I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd.  
 So let me be thy choir, and make a moan  
 Upon the midnight hours;  
 Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet  
 From swung censer teeming;  
 Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat  
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane 50  
 In some untrodden region of my mind,  
 Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,  
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:  
 Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees  
 Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;

And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,  
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;  
 And in the midst of this wide quietness  
 A rosy sanctury will I dress

With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain, 60  
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,  
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,  
 Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:  
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight  
 That shadowy thought can win,  
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,  
 To let the warm Love in!

## FANCY

EVER let the fancy roam,  
 Pleasure never is at home:  
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,  
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;  
 Then let winged Fancy wander  
 Through the thought still spread beyond her:  
 Open wide the mind's cage-door,  
 She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.  
 O sweet Fancy! let her loose;  
 Summer's joys are spoilt by use, 10  
 And the enjoying of the Spring  
 Fades as does its blossoming;  
 Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,  
 Blushing through the mist and dew,  
 Cloys with tasting: What do then?  
 Sit thee by the ingle, when  
 The sear faggot blazes bright,  
 Spirit of a winter's night;  
 When the soundless earth is muffled,  
 And the caked snow is shuffled 20  
 From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;  
 When the Night doth meet the Noon  
 In a dark conspiracy  
 To banish Even from her sky.  
 Sit thee there, and send abroad,  
 With a mind self-overaw'd,  
 Fancy, high-commission'd:—send her!  
 She has vassals to attend her:  
 She will bring, in spite of frost,  
 Beauties that the earth hath lost; 30

She will bring thee, all together,  
 All delights of summer weather;  
 All the buds and bells of May,  
 From dewy sward or thorny spray;  
 All the heaped Autumn's wealth,  
 With a still, mysterious stealth:  
 She will mix these pleasures up  
 Like three fit wines in a cup,  
 And thou shalt quaff it:—thou shalt hear  
 Distant harvest-carols clear; 40  
 Rustle of the reaped corn;  
 Sweet birds antheming the morn:  
 And, in the same moment—hark!  
 'Tis the early April lark,  
 Or the rooks, with busy caw,  
 Foraging for sticks and straw.  
 Thou shalt, at one glance, behold  
 The daisy and the marigold;  
 White-plum'd lillies, and the first  
 Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst; 50  
 Shaded hyacinth, alway  
 Sapphire queen of the mid-May;  
 And every leaf, and every flower  
 Pearled with the self-same shower.  
 Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep  
 Meagre from its celled sleep;  
 And the snake all winter-thin  
 Cast on sunny bank its skin;  
 Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see  
 Hatching in the hawthorn tree, 60  
 When the hen-bird's wing doth rest  
 Quiet on her mossy nest;  
 Then the hurry and alarm  
 When the bee-hive casts its swarm;  
 Acorns ripe down-pattering,  
 While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;  
 Every thing is spoilt by use:  
 Where's the cheek that doth not fade,  
 Too much gaz'd at? Where's the maid 70  
 Whose lip mature is ever new?  
 Where's the eye, however blue,  
 Doth not weary? Where's the face  
 One would meet in every place?  
 Where's the voice, however soft,  
 One would hear so very oft?

At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth  
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.  
 Let, then, winged Fancy find  
 Thee a mistress to thy mind: 80  
 Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,  
 Ere the God of Torment taught her  
 How to frown and how to chide;  
 With a waist and with a side  
 White as Hebe's, when her zone  
 Slipt its golden clasp, and down  
 Fell her kirtle to her feet,  
 While she held the goblet sweet,  
 And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh  
 Of the Fancy's silken leash; 90  
 Quickly break her prison-string  
 And such joys as these she'll bring.—  
 Let the winged Fancy roam,  
 Pleasure never is at home.

## ODE

[*Written on the blank page before Beaumont and Fletcher's Tragicomedy "The Fair Maid of the Inn."*]

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,  
 Ye have left your souls on earth!  
 Have ye souls in heaven too,  
 Double lived in regions new?  
 Yes, and those of heaven commune  
 With the spheres of sun and moon;  
 With the noise of fountains wound'rous,  
 And the parle of voices thund'rous;  
 With the whisper of heaven's trees  
 And one another, in soft ease 10

Seated on Elysian lawns  
 Brows'd by none but Dian's fawns;  
 Underneath large blue-bells tented,  
 Where the daisies are rose-scented,  
 And the rose herself has got  
 Perfume which on earth is not;  
 Where the nightingale doth sing  
 Not a senseless, tranced thing,  
 But divine melodious truth;  
 Philosophic numbers smooth; 20  
 Tales and golden histories  
 Of heaven and its mysteries.



Thus ye live on high, and then  
 On the earth ye live again;  
 And the souls ye left behind you  
 Teach us, here, the way to find you,  
 Where your other souls are joying,  
 Never slumber'd, never cloying.  
 Here, your earth-born souls still speak  
 To mortals, of their little week;  
 Of their sorrows and delights;  
 Of their passions and their spites;  
 Of their glory and their shame;  
 What doth strengthen and what maim.  
 Thus ye teach us, every day,  
 Wisdom, though fled far away.

39

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,  
 Ye have left your souls on earth!  
 Ye have souls in heaven too,  
 Double-lived in regions new!

40

# LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

SOULS of Poets dead and gone,  
 What Elysium have ye known,  
 Happy field or mossy cavern,  
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?  
 Have ye tippled drink more fine  
 Than mine host's Canary wine?  
 Or are fruits of Paradise  
 Sweeter than those dainty pies  
 Of venison? O generous food!  
 Drest as though bold Robin Hood  
 Would, with his maid Marian,  
 Sup and bowse from horn and can.

10

I have heard that on a day  
 Mine host's sign-board flew away,  
 Nobody knew whither, till  
 An astrologer's old quill  
 To a sheepskin gave the story,  
 Said he saw you in your glory,  
 Underneath a new old sign  
 Sipping beverage divine,  
 And pledging with contented smack  
 The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

20

## K E A T S

Souls of Poets dead and gone,  
 What Elysium have ye known,  
 Happy field or mossy cavern,  
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

## ROBIN HOOD

## TO A FRIEND

No! those days are gone away,  
 And their hours are old and gray,  
 And their minutes buried all  
 Under the down-trodden pall  
 Of the leaves of many years:  
 Many times have winter's shears,  
 Frozen North, and chilling East,  
 Sounded tempests to the feast  
 Of the forest's whispering fleeces,  
 Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

10

No, the bugle sounds no more,  
 And the twanging bow no more;  
 Silent is the ivory shrill  
 Past the heath and up the hill;  
 There is no mid-forest laugh,  
 Where lone Echo gives the half  
 To some wight, amaz'd to hear  
 Jestings, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June  
 You may go, with sun or moon,  
 Or the seven stars to light you,  
 Or the polar ray to right you;  
 But you never may behold  
 Little John, or Robin bold;  
 Never one, of all the clan,  
 Thrumming on an empty can  
 Some old hunting ditty, while  
 He doth his green way beguile  
 To fair hostess Merriment,  
 Down beside the pasture Trent;  
 For he left the merry tale  
 Messenger for spicy ale.

20

30

Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,  
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;  
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,  
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,  
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

## III

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;  
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
Turning to Poison while the bee-mouth sips:  
Ay, in the very temple of delight  
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue  
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;  
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,  
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

# HYPERION

## A FRAGMENT

### BOOK I

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale  
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,  
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,  
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,  
Still as the silence round about his lair;  
Forest on forest hung about his head  
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,  
Not so much life as on a summer's day  
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,  
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest. 10  
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more  
By reason of his fallen divinity  
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds  
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,  
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,  
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground  
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,  
Unscathed; and his realmless eyes were closed;  
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth,  
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet. 21

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;  
But there came one, who with a kindred hand  
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low  
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.  
She was a Goddess of the infant world;  
By her in stature the tall Amazon  
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have ta'en  
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;  
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel. 30  
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,  
Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,  
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.

But oh! how unlike marble was that face:  
 How beautiful, if sorow had not made  
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.  
 There was a listening fear in her regard,  
 As if calamity had but begun;  
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days  
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear 40  
 Was with its stored thunder labouring up.  
 One hand she press'd upon that aching spot  
 Where beats the human heart, as if just there,  
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain:  
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck  
 She laid, and to the level of his ear  
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake  
 In solemn tenour and deep organ tone:  
 Some mourning words. which in our feeble tongue  
 Would come in these like accents; O how frail 50  
 To that large utterance of the early Gods!  
 "Saturn, look up!—though wherefore, poor old King?  
 "I have no comfort for thee, no not one:  
 "I cannot say, 'O wherefore sleepest thou?'  
 "For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth  
 "Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;  
 "And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,  
 "Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air  
 "Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.  
 "Thy thunder, conscious of the new command, 60  
 "Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;  
 "And thy sharp lightning in unpractis'd hands  
 "Scorches and burns our once serene domain.  
 "O aching time! O moments big as years!  
 "All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,  
 "And press it so upon our weary griefs  
 "That unbelief has not a space to breathe.  
 "Saturn, sleep on:—O thoughtless, why did I  
 "Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?  
 "Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes? 70  
 "Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,  
 Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,  
 Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,  
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,  
 Save from one gradual solitary gust  
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,  
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave;  
 So came these words and went; the while in tears

She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,  
 Just where her falling hair might be outspread 81  
 A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.  
 One moon, with alteration slow, had shed  
 Her silver seasons four upon the night,  
 And still these two were postured motionless,  
 Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;  
 The frozen God still couchant on the earth,  
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:  
 Until at length old Saturn lifted up  
 His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone, 90  
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,  
 And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then spake,  
 As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard  
 Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:  
 "O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,  
 "Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;  
 "Look up, and let me see our doom in it;  
 "Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape  
 "Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice  
 "Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow, 100  
 "Naked and bare of its great diadem,  
 "Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power  
 "To make me desolate? whence came the strength?  
 "How was it nurtur'd to such bursting forth,  
 "While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp?  
 "But it is so; and I am smother'd up,  
 "And buried from all godlike exercise  
 "Of influence benign on planets pale,  
 "Of admonitions to the winds and seas,  
 "Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting, 110  
 "And all those acts which Deity supreme  
 "Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone  
 "Away from my own bosom: I have left  
 "My strong identity, my real self,  
 "Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit  
 "Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!  
 "Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round  
 "Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light;  
 "Space region'd with life-air; and barren void;  
 "Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.— 120  
 "Search, Thea, search! and tell me, if thou seest  
 "A certain shape or shadow, making way  
 "With wings or chariot fierce to repossess  
 "A heaven he lost erewhile: it must—it must  
 "Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King.  
 "Yes; there must be a golden victory;

"There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown  
 "Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival  
 "Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,  
 "Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir 130  
 "Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be  
 "Beautiful things made new, for the surprise  
 "Of the sky-children; I will give command:  
 "Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?" ||

This passion lifted him upon his feet,  
 And made his hands to struggle in the air,  
 His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,  
 His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.  
 He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep;  
 A little time, and then again he snatch'd 140  
 Utterance thus.—"But cannot I create?  
 "Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth  
 "Another world, another universe,  
 "To overbear and crumble this to naught?  
 "Where is another chaos? Where?"—That word  
 Found way unto Olympus, and made quake  
 The rebel three.—Thea was startled up,  
 And in her bearing was a sort of hope,  
 As thus she quick-voic'd spake, yet full of awe.  
 "This cheers our fallen house: come to our friends, 150  
 "O Saturn! come away, and give them heart;  
 "I know the covert, for thence came I hither."  
 Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes she went  
 With backward footing through the shade a space:  
 He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way  
 Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist  
 Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,  
 More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,  
 Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe: 160  
 The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,  
 Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,  
 And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.  
 But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept  
 His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty;—  
 Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire  
 Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up  
 From man to the sun's God; yet unsecure:  
 For as among us mortals omens drear  
 Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he— 170  
 Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,

Or the familiar visiting of one  
 Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,  
 Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;  
 But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,  
 Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright  
 Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,  
 And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,  
 Glar'd a blood-red through all its thousand courts,  
 Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries; 180  
 And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds  
 Flush'd angerly: while sometimes eagles' wings,  
 Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,  
 Darken'd the place; and neighing steeds were heard,  
 Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.  
 Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths  
 Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,  
 Instead of sweets, his ample palate took  
 Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick: 190  
 And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west,  
 After the full completion of fair day,—  
 For rest divine upon exalted couch  
 And slumber in the arms of melody,  
 He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease  
 With stride colossal, on from hall to hall;  
 While far within each aisle and deep recess,  
 His winged minions in close clusters stood,  
 Amaz'd and full of fear; like anxious men  
 Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,  
 When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers. 200  
 Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,  
 Went step for step with Thea through the woods,  
 Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,  
 Came slope upon the threshold of the west;  
 Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope  
 In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,  
 Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet  
 And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies;  
 And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,  
 In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye, 210  
 That inlet to severe magnificence  
 Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath;  
 His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,  
 And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,  
 That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours  
 And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,



From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,  
 Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,  
 And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades, 220  
 Until he reach'd the great main cupola;  
 There standing fierce beneath, he stamped his foot,  
 And from the basements deep to the high towers  
 Jarr'd his own golden region; and before  
 The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd,  
 His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,  
 To this result: "O dreams of day and night!  
 "O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!  
 "O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!  
 "O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools! 230  
 "Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why  
 "Is my eternal essence thus distraught  
 "To see and to behold these horrors new?  
 "Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?  
 "Am I to leave this haven of my rest,  
 "This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,  
 "This calm luxuriance of blissful light,  
 "These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,  
 "Of all my lucent empire? It is left  
 "Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine. 240  
 "The blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry,  
 "I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.  
 "Even here, into my centre of repose,  
 "The shady visions come to domineer,  
 "Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.—  
 "Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny robes!  
 "Over the fiery frontier of my realms  
 "I will advance a terrible right arm  
 "Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,  
 "And bid old Saturn take his throne again."— 250  
 He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat  
 Held struggle with his throat but came not forth;  
 For as in theatres of crowded men  
 Hubbub increases more they call out "Hush!"  
 So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale  
 Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold;  
 And from the mirror'd level where he stood  
 A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.  
 At this, through all his bulk an agony  
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown, 260  
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular  
 Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd  
 From over-strained might. Releas'd, he fled  
 To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours

Before the dawn in season due should blush,  
 He breath'd fierce breath against the sleepy portals,  
 Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide  
 Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.  
 The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode  
 Each day from east to west the heavens through, 270  
 Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds;  
 Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,  
 But ever and anon the glancing spheres,  
 Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,  
 Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark  
 Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep  
 Up to the zenith,—hieroglyphics old  
 Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers  
 Then living on the earth, with labouring thought  
 Won from the gaze of many centuries: 280  
 Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge  
 Of stone, or marble swart; their import gone,  
 Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings this orb  
 Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,  
 Ever exalted at the God's approach:  
 And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense  
 Rose, one by one, till all outspread were;  
 While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,  
 Awaiting for Hyperion's command.  
 Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne 290  
 And bid the day begin, if but for change.  
 He might not:—No, though a primeval God:  
 The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.  
 Therefore the operations of the dawn  
 Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told.  
 Those silver wings expanded sisterly,  
 Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide  
 Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night;  
 And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,  
 Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent 300  
 His spirit to the sorrow of the time;  
 And all along a dismal rack of clouds,  
 Upon the boundaries of day and night,  
 He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.  
 There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars  
 Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice  
 Of Cœlus, from the universal space,  
 Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear.  
 "O brightest of my children dear, earth-born  
 "And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries 310  
 "All unrevealed even to the powers

"Which met at thy creating; at whose joys  
 "And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,  
 "I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence;  
 "And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,  
 "Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,  
 "Manifestations of that beauteous life  
 "Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space:  
 "Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child!  
 "Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses! 320  
 "There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion  
 "Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,  
 "I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne!  
 "To me his arms were spread, to me his voice  
 "Found way from forth the thunders round his head!  
 "Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.  
 "Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is:  
 "For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.  
 "Divine ye were created, and divine 330  
 "In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,  
 "Unruffled, like high Gods, ye liv'd and ruled:  
 "Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath;  
 "Actions of rage and passion; even as  
 "I see them, on the mortal world beneath,  
 "In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son!  
 "Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!  
 "Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,  
 "As thou canst move about, an evident God;  
 "And canst oppose to each malignant hour  
 "Ethereal presence:—I am but a voice; 340  
 "My life is but the life of winds and tides,  
 "No more than winds and tides can I avail:—  
 "But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van  
 "Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb  
 "Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth!  
 "For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.  
 "Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,  
 "And of thy seasons be a careful nurse."—  
 Ere half this region-whisper had come down,  
 Hyperion arose, and on the stars 350  
 Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide  
 Until it ceased; and still he kept them wide:  
 And still they were the same bright, patient stars.  
 Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,  
 Like to a diver in the pearly seas,  
 Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,  
 And plung'd all noiseless into the deep night.

## HYPERION. BOOK II

JUST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings  
 Hyperion slid into the rustled air,  
 And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place  
 Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.  
 It was a den where no insulting light  
 Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans  
 They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar  
 Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,  
 Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.  
 Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd 10  
 Ever as if just rising from a sleep,  
 Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;  
 And thus in thousand hugest phantasies  
 Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.  
 Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,  
 Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge  
 Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled:  
 Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.  
 Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,  
 Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon, 20  
 With many more, the brawniest in assault,  
 Were pent in regions of laborious breath;  
 Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep  
 Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs  
 Lock'd up like veins of metal, crampt and screw'd;  
 Without a motion, save of their big hearts  
 Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd  
 With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse,  
 Mnemosyne was straying in the world;  
 Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered; 30  
 And many else were free to roam abroad,  
 But for the main, here found they covert drear.  
 Scarce images of life, one here, one there,  
 Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque  
 Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,  
 When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,  
 In dull November, and their chancel vault,  
 The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.  
 Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave  
 Or word, or look, or action of despair. 40  
 Creüs was one; his ponderous iron mace  
 Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock  
 Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.  
 Iäpetus another; in his grasp,

A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue  
 Squeez'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length  
 Dead; and because the creature could not spit  
 Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.  
 Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,  
 As though in pain; for still upon the flint  
 He ground severe his skull, with open mouth  
 And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him  
 Asia, born of most enormous Caf,  
 Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,  
 Though feminine, than any of her sons:  
 More thought than woe was in her dusky face,  
 For she was prophesying of her glory;  
 And in her wide imagination stood  
 Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,  
 By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.  
 Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,  
 So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk  
 Shed from the broadest of her elephants.  
 Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelf,  
 Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else,  
 Shadow'd Enceladus; once tame and mild  
 As grazing ox unworried in the meads;  
 Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,  
 He meditated, plotted, and even now  
 Was hurling mountains in that second war,  
 Not long delay'd, that scar'd the younger Gods  
 To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.  
 Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone  
 Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close  
 Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap  
 Sobbed Clymene among her tangled hair.  
 In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet  
 Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight;  
 No shape distinguishable, more than when  
 Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds:  
 And many else whose names may not be told.  
 For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,  
 Who shall delay her flight? And she must chaunt  
 Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd  
 With damp and slippery footing from a depth  
 More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff  
 Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew  
 Till on the level height their steps found ease:  
 Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms  
 Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,  
 And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face:

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There saw she direst strife; the supreme God  
 At war with all the frailty of grief,  
 Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,  
 Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.  
 Against these plagues he strove in vain; for Fate  
 Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,  
 A disanointing poison: so that Thea,  
 Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass  
 First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

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As with us mortal men, the laden heart  
 Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,  
 When it is nighing to the mournful house  
 Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise;  
 So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,  
 Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,  
 But that he met Enceladus's eye,  
 Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once  
 Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,  
 "Titans, behold your God!" at which some groan'd;  
 Some started on their feet; some also shouted;  
 Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence:  
 And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,  
 Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,  
 Her eye-brows thin and jet, and hollow eyes.  
 There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines  
 When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise  
 Among immortals when a God gives sign,  
 With hushing finger, how he means to load  
 His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,  
 With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:  
 Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines:  
 Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,  
 No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,  
 Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom  
 Grew up like organ, that begins anew  
 Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,  
 Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.  
 Thus grew it up—"Not in my own sad breast,  
 "Which is its own great judge and searcher out,  
 "Can I find reason why ye should be thus:  
 "Not in the legends of the first of days,  
 "Studied from that old spirit-leaved book  
 "Which starry Uranus with finger bright  
 "Sav'd from the shores of darkness, when the waves  
 "Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom;—  
 "And the which book ye know I ever kept

111

121

131

"For my firm-based footstool:—Ah, infirm!  
 "Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent  
 "Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,— 140  
 "At war, at peace, or inter-quarreling  
 "One against one, or two, or three, or all  
 "Each several one against the other three,  
 "As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods  
 "Drown both, and press them both against earth's face,  
 "Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath  
 "Unhinges the poor world;—not in that strife,  
 "Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,  
 "Can I find reason why ye should be thus:  
 "No, no—where can unriddle, though I search, 150  
 "And pore on Nature's universal scroll  
 "Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,  
 "The first-born of all shap'd and palpable Gods,  
 "Should cower beneath what, in comparison,  
 "Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,  
 "O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here!  
 "O Titans, shall I say, 'Arise!'—Ye groan:  
 "Shall I say 'Crouch!'—Ye groan. What can I then?  
 "O Heaven wide! O unseen parent dear!  
 "What can I? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods, 160  
 "How we can war, how engine our great wrath!  
 "O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear  
 "Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,  
 "Ponderest high and deep; and in thy face  
 "I see, astonied, that severe content  
 "Which comes of thought and musing: give us help!"

So ended Saturn; and the God of the Sea,  
 Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,  
 But cogitation in his watery shades,  
 Arose, with locks not oozy, and began, 170  
 In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue  
 Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.  
 "O ye, whom wrath consumes! who, passion-strung,  
 "Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies!  
 "Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,  
 "My voice is not a bellows unto ire.  
 "Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof  
 "How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop:  
 "And in the proof much comfort will I give,  
 "If ye will take that comfort in its truth.  
 "We fall by course of Nature's law, not force  
 "Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou  
 "Hast sifted well the atom-universe;

"But for this reason, that thou art the King,  
 "And only blind from sheer supremacy,  
 "One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,  
 "Through which I wandered to eternal truth.  
 "And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,  
 "So art thou not the last; it cannot be:  
 "Thou art not the beginning nor the end. 190  
 "From chaos and parental darkness came  
 "Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,  
 "That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends  
 "Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,  
 "And with it light, and light, engendering  
 "Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd  
 "The whole enormous matter into life.  
 "Upon that very hour, our parentage,  
 "The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest:  
 "Then thou first born, and we the giant race, 200  
 "Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.  
 "Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain;  
 "O folly! for to bear all naked truths,  
 "And to envisage circumstance, all calm,  
 "That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well!  
 "As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far  
 "Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;  
 "And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth  
 "In form and shape compact and beautiful,  
 "In will, in action free, companionship, 210  
 "And thousand other signs of purer life;  
 "So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,  
 "A power more strong in beauty, born of us  
 "And fated to excel us, as we pass  
 "In glory that old Darkness: nor are we  
 "Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule  
 "Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil  
 "Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,  
 "And feedeth still, more comely than itself?  
 "Can it deny the chieftom of green groves? 220  
 "Or shall the tree be envious of the dove  
 "Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings  
 "To wander wherewithal and find its joys?  
 "We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs  
 "Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,  
 "But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower  
 "Above us in their beauty, and must reign  
 "In right thereof; for 'tis the eternal law  
 "That first in beauty should be first in might:  
 "Yea, by that law, another race may drive 230



"Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.  
 "Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,  
 "My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?  
 "Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along  
 "By noble winged creatures he hath made?  
 "I saw him on the calmed waters scud,  
 "With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,  
 "That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell  
 "To all my empire: farewell sad I took,  
 "And hither came, to see how dolorous fate  
 "Had wrought upon ye; and how I might best  
 "Give consolation in this woe extreme.  
 "Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

240

Whether through poz'd conviction, or disdain,  
 They guarded silence, when Oceanus  
 Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell?  
 But so it was, none answer'd for a space.  
 Save one whom none regarded, Clymene;  
 And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,  
 With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild,  
 Thus wording timidly among the fierce:  
 "O Father, I am here the simplest voice,  
 "And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,  
 "And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,  
 "There to remain for ever, as I fear:  
 "I would not bode of evil, if I thought  
 "So weak a creature could turn off the help  
 "Which by just right should come of mighty Gods;  
 "Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell  
 "Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,  
 "And know that we had parted from all hope.  
 "I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,  
 "Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land  
 "Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.  
 "Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;  
 "Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;  
 "So that I felt a movement in my heart  
 "To chide, and to reproach that solitude  
 "With songs of misery, music of our woes;  
 "And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell  
 "And murmur'd into it, and made melody—  
 "O melody no more! for while I sang,  
 "And with poor skill let pass into the breeze  
 "The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand  
 "Just opposite, an island of the sea,  
 "There came enchantment with the shifting wind,

250

260

270

"That did both drown and keep alive my ears.  
 "I threw my shell away upon the sand,  
 "And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd 280  
 "With that new blissful golden melody.  
 "A living death was in each gush of sounds,  
 "Each family of rapturous hurried notes,  
 "That fell, one after one, yet all at once,  
 "Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:  
 "And then another, then another strain,  
 "Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,  
 "With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,  
 "To hover round my head, and make me sick  
 "Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,  
 "And I was stopping up my frantic ears, 290  
 "When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,  
 "A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,  
 "And still it cried, 'Apollo! young Apollo!  
 "'The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!'  
 "I fled, it follow'd me, and cried 'Apollo!'  
 "O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt  
 "Those pains of mine; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,  
 "Ye would not call this too indulged tongue  
 "Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard."

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook 300  
 That, lingering along a pebbled coast,  
 Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,  
 And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice  
 Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:  
 The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves  
 In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,  
 Came booming thus, while still upon his arm  
 He lean'd; not rising, from supreme contempt.  
 "Or shall we listen to the over-wise,  
 "Or to the over-foolish, Giant-Gods? 310  
 "Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all  
 "That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,  
 "Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,  
 "Could agonize me more than baby-words  
 "In midst of this dethronement horrible.  
 "Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all.  
 "Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?  
 "Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?  
 "Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,  
 "Thy scalding in the seas? What, have I rous'd 320  
 "Your spleens with so few simple words as these?  
 "O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:

"O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes  
 "Wide-glaring for revenge!"—As this he said,  
 He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,  
 Still without intermission speaking thus:  
 "Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,  
 "And purge the ether of our enemies;  
 "How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,  
 "And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove, 330  
 "Stifling that puny essence in its tent.  
 "O let him feel the evil he hath done;  
 "For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,  
 "Much pain have I for more than loss of realms:  
 "The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled;  
 "Those days, all innocent of scathing war,  
 "When all the fair Existences of heaven  
 "Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak:—  
 "That was before our brows were taught to frown,  
 "Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds; 340  
 "That was before we knew the winged thing,  
 "Victory, might be lost, or might be won.  
 "And be ye mindful that Hyperion,  
 "Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—  
 "Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here!"

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,  
 And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name  
 Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,  
 A pallid gleam across his features stern:  
 Not savage, for he saw full many a God 350  
 Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,  
 And in each face he saw a gleam of light,  
 But splendider in Saturn's, whose hoar locks  
 Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel  
 When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.  
 In pale and silver silence they remain'd,  
 Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,  
 Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,  
 All the sad spaces of oblivion,  
 And every gulf, and every chasm old, 360  
 And every height, and every sullen depth,  
 Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams:  
 And all the everlasting cataracts,  
 And all the headlong torrents far and near,  
 Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,  
 Now saw the light and made it terrible.  
 It was Hyperion:—a granite peak  
 His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view

The misery his brilliance had betray'd  
 To the most hateful seeing of itself. 370  
 Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,  
 Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade  
 In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk  
 Of Memnon's image at the set of sun  
 To one who travels from the dusking East:  
 Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp  
 He utter'd, while his hands contemplative  
 He press'd together, and in silence stood.  
 Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods  
 At sight of the dejected King of Day, 380  
 And many hid their faces from the light:  
 But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes  
 Among the brotherhood; and, at their glare,  
 Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs, too,  
 And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode  
 To where he towered on his eminence.  
 There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name;  
 Hyperion from the peak loud answered, "Saturn!"  
 Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,  
 In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods 390  
 Gave from their hollow throats the name of "Saturn!"

### HYPERION. BOOK III

THUS in alternate uproar and sad peace,  
 Amazed were those Titans utterly.  
 O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes;  
 For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:  
 A solitary sorrow best befits  
 Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.  
 Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find  
 Many a fallen old Divinity  
 Wandering in vain about bewildered shores. 10  
 Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,  
 And not a wind of heaven but will breathe  
 In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;  
 For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse.  
 Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,  
 Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,  
 And let the clouds of even and of morn  
 Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;  
 Let the red wine within the goblet boil,  
 Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,  
 On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn 20  
 Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid

Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd.  
 Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,  
 Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,  
 And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,  
 In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,  
 And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade:  
 Apollo is once more the golden theme!  
 Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun  
 Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers? 30  
 Together had he left his mother fair  
 And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,  
 And in the morning twilight wandered forth  
 Beside the osiers of a rivulet,  
 Full ankle-deep in lillies of the vale.  
 The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars  
 Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush  
 Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle  
 There was no covert, no retired cave  
 Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves. 40  
 Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.  
 He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears  
 Went trickling down the golden bow he held.  
 Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,  
 While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by  
 With solemn step an awful Goddess came,  
 And there was purport in her looks for him,  
 Which he with eager guess began to read  
 Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said:  
 "How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea? 50  
 "Or hath that antique mien and robed form  
 "Mov'd in these vales invisible till now?  
 "Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er  
 "The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone  
 "In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced  
 "The rustle of those ample skirts about  
 "These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers  
 "Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.  
 "Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,  
 "And their eternal calm, and all that face, 60  
 "Or I have dream'd."—"Yes," said the supreme shape,  
 "Thou hast dream'd of me; and awaking up  
 "Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,  
 "Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast  
 "Unwearied ear of the whole universe  
 "Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth  
 "Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange  
 "That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell me, youth,

"What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am sad  
 "When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy griefs  
 "To one who in this lonely isle hath been 71  
 "The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,  
 "From the young day when first thy infant hand  
 "Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm  
 "Could bend that bow heroic to all times.  
 "Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power  
 "Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones  
 "For prophecies of thee, and for the sake  
 "Of loveliness new born."—Apollo then,  
 With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes, 80  
 Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat  
 Throbb'd with the syllables.—"Mnemosyne!  
 "Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how;  
 "Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest?  
 "Why should I strive to show what from thy lips  
 "Would come no mystery? For me, dark, dark,  
 "And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:  
 "I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,  
 "Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;  
 "And then upon the grass I sit, and moan, 90  
 "Like one who once had wings.—O why should I  
 "Feel curs'd and thwarted, when the liegeless air  
 "Yields to my step aspirant? why should I  
 "Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet?  
 "Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing:  
 "Are there not other regions than this isle?  
 "What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun!  
 "And the most patient brilliance of the moon!  
 "And stars by thousands! Point me out the way  
 "To any one particular beauteous star, 100  
 "And I will flit into it with my lyre,  
 "And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.  
 "I have heard the cloudy thunder: Where is power?  
 "Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity  
 "Makes this alarum in the elements,  
 "While I here idle listen on the shores  
 "In fearless yet in aching ignorance?  
 "O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,  
 "That waileth every morn and eventide,  
 "Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves! 110  
 "Mute thou remainest—mute! yet I can read  
 "A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:  
 "Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.  
 "Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,  
 "Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,

"Creations and destroyings, all at once  
 "Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,  
 "And deify me, as if some blithe wine  
 "Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,  
 "And so become immortal."—Thus the God, 120  
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance  
 Beneath his white soft temples, stedfast kept  
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.  
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush  
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs;  
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death;  
 Or liker still to one who should take leave  
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang  
 As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse  
Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd: 130  
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed  
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.  
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld  
 Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length  
 Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his limbs  
 Celestial \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

THE END





POSTHUMOUS  
AND  
FUGITIVE POEMS



## POSTHUMOUS AND FUGITIVE POEMS

### ON DEATH

#### I

CAN death be sleep, when life is but a dream,  
And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?  
The transient pleasures as a vision seem,  
And yet we think the greatest pain's to die.

#### II

How strange it is that man on earth should roam,  
And lead a life of woe, but not forsake  
His rugged path; nor dare he view alone  
His future doom which is but to awake.

### WOMEN, WINE, AND SNUFF

GIVE me women, wine and snuff  
Until I cry out "hold, enough!"  
You may do so sans objection  
Till the day of resurrection;  
For bless my beard they aye shall be  
My beloved Trinity.

### FILL FOR ME A BRIMMING BOWL

FILL for me a brimming bowl  
And let me in it drown my soul:  
But put therein some drug, designed  
To Banish Women from my mind:  
For I want not the stream inspiring  
That fills the mind with—fond desiring,  
But I want as deep a draught  
As e'er from Lethe's wave was quaff'd;  
From my despairing heart to charm  
The Image of the fairest form  
That e'er my reveling eyes beheld,  
That e'er my wandering fancy spell'd.  
In vain! away I cannot chace  
The melting softness of that face,

## K E A T S

The beaminess of those bright eyes,  
 That breast—earth's only Paradise.  
 My sight will never more be blest;  
 For all I see has lost its zest:  
 Nor with delight can I explore  
 The Classic page, or Muse's lore.  
 Had she but known how beat my heart,  
 And with one smile reliev'd its smart  
 I should have felt a sweet relief,  
 I should have felt "the joy of grief."  
 Yet as the Tuscan mid the snow  
 Of Lapland thinks on sweet Arno,  
 Even so for ever shall she be  
 The Halo of my Memory.

*August, 1814.*

20

## SONNET

## ON PEACE

O PEACE! and dost thou with thy presence bless  
 The dwellings of this war-surrounded Isle;  
 Soothing with placid brow our late distress,  
 Making the triple kingdom brightly smile?  
 Joyful I hail thy presence; and I hail  
 The sweet companions that await on thee;  
 Complete my joy—let not my first wish fail,  
 Let the sweet mountain nymph thy favourite be,  
 With England's happiness proclaim Europa's Liberty.  
 O Europe! let not sceptred tyrants see  
 That thou must shelter in thy former state;  
 Keep thy chains burst, and boldly say thou art free;  
 Give thy kings law—leave not uncurbed the great;  
 So with the horrors past thou'lt win thy happier fate!

10

## SONNET TO BYRON

BYRON! how sweetly sad thy melody!  
 Attuning still the soul to tenderness,  
 As if soft Pity, with unusual stress,  
 Had touch'd her plaintive lute, and thou, being by,  
 Hadst caught the tones, nor suffer'd them to die.  
 O'ershadowing sorrow doth not make thee less  
 Delightful: thou thy griefs dost dress  
 With a bright halo, shining beamily,  
 As when a cloud the golden moon doth veil,  
 Its sides are ting'd with a resplendent glow,

10

Through the dark robe oft amber rays prevail,  
 And like fair veins in sable marble flow;  
 Still warble, dying swan! still tell the tale,  
 The enchanting tale, the tale of pleasing woe.

### SONNET TO CHATTERTON

O CHATTERTON! how very sad thy fate!  
 Dear child of sorrow—son of misery!  
 How soon the film of death obscur'd that eye,  
 Whence Genius mildly flash'd, and high debate.  
 How soon that voice, majestic and elate,  
 Melted in dying numbers! Oh! how nigh  
 Was night to thy fair morning. Thou didst die  
 A half-blown flow'ret which cold blasts amate.  
 But this is past: thou art among the stars  
 Of highest Heaven: to the rolling spheres  
 Thou sweetly singest: naught thy hymning mars,  
 Above the ingrate world and human fears.  
 On earth the good man base detraction bars  
 From thy fair name, and waters it with tears.

### SONNET TO SPENSER

SPENSER! a jealous honourer of thine,  
 A forester deep in thy midmost trees,  
 Did last eve ask my promise to refine  
 Some English that might strive thine ear to please.  
 But Elfin Poet 'tis impossible  
 For an inhabitant of wintry earth  
 To rise like Phœbus with a golden quill  
 Fire-wing'd and make a morning in his mirth.  
 It is impossible to escape from toil  
 O' the sudden and receive thy spiriting:  
 The flower must drink the nature of the soil  
 Before it can put forth its blossoming:  
 Be with me in the summer days and I  
 Will for thine honour and his pleasure try.

### ODE TO APOLLO

IN thy western halls of gold  
 When thou sittest in thy state,  
 Bards, that erst sublimely told  
 Heroic deeds, and sang of fate,  
 With fervour seize their adamant lyres,  
 Whose chords are solid rays, and twinkle radiant fires.

Here Homer with his nervous arms  
 Strikes the twanging harp of war,  
 And even the western splendour warms,  
 While the trumpets sound afar: 10  
 But, what creates the most intense surprise,  
 His soul looks out through renovated eyes.

Then, through thy Temple wide, melodious swells  
 The sweet majestic tone of Maro's lyre:  
 The soul delighted on each accent dwells,—  
 Enraptur'd dwells,—not daring to respire,  
 The while he tells of grief around a funeral pyre.

'Tis awful silence then again;  
 Expectant stand the spheres;  
 Breathless the laurel'd peers, 20  
 Nor move, till ends the lofty strain,  
 Nor move till Milton's tuneful thunders cease,  
 And leave once more the ravish'd heavens in peace.

Thou biddest Shakspeare wave his hand,  
 And quickly forward spring  
 The Passions—a terrific band—  
 And each vibrates the string  
 That with its tyrant temper best accords,  
 While from their Master's lips pour forth the inspiring words.

A silver trumpet Spenser blows, 30  
 And, as its martial notes to silence flee,  
 From a virgin chorus flows  
 A hymn in praise of spotless Chastity.  
 'Tis still! Wild warblings from the Æolian lyre  
 Enchantment softly breathe, and tremblingly expire.

Next thy Tasso's ardent numbers  
 Float along the pleased air,  
 Calling youth from idle slumbers,  
 Rousing them from Pleasure's lair:—  
 Then o'er the strings his fingers gently move,  
 And melt the soul to pity and to love. 41

But when *Thou* joinest with the Nine,  
 And all the powers of song combine,  
 We listen here on earth:  
 The dying tones that fill the air,  
 And charm the ear of evening fair,  
 From thee, great God of Bards, receive their heavenly birth.

SONNET

TO A YOUNG LADY WHO SENT ME A LAUREL CROWN

FRESH morning gusts have blown away all fear  
 From my glad bosom,—now from gloominess  
 I mount for ever—not an atom less  
 Than the proud laurel shall content my bier.  
 No! by the eternal stars! or why sit here  
 In the Sun's eye, and 'gainst my temples press  
 Apollo's very leaves, woven to bless  
 By thy white fingers and thy spirit clear.  
 Lo! who dares say, "Do this"? Who dares call down  
 My will from its high purpose? Who say, "Stand,"  
 Or "Go"? This mighty moment I would frown  
 On abject Cæsars—not the stoutest band  
 Of mailed heroes should tear off my crown:  
 Yet would I kneel and kiss thy gentle hand!

ON RECEIVING A LAUREL CROWN FROM LEIGH HUNT

MINUTES are flying swiftly, and as yet  
 Nothing unearthly has enticed my brain  
 Into a delphic Labyrinth—I would fain  
 Catch an immortal thought to pay the debt  
 I owe to the kind Poet who has set  
 Upon my ambitious head a glorious gain.  
 Two bending laurel Sprigs—'tis nearly pain  
 To be conscious of such a Coronet.  
 Still time is fleeting, and no dream arises  
 Gorgeous as I would have it—only I see  
 A Trampling down of what the world most prizes  
 Turbans and Crowns, and blank regality;  
 And then I run into most wild surmises  
 Of all the many glories that may be.

SONNET

TO THE LADIES WHO SAW ME CROWN'D

WHAT is there in the universal Earth  
 More lovely than a Wreath from the bay tree?  
 Haply a Halo round the Moon—a glee  
 Circling from three sweet pair of Lips in Mirth;  
 And haply you will say the dewy birth  
 Of morning Roses—rippplings tenderly  
 Spread by the Halcyon's breast upon the Sea—

But these Comparisons are nothing worth—  
Then is there nothing in the world so fair?

The silvery tears of April?—Youth of May?  
Or June that breathes out life for butterflies?

10

No—none of these can from my favourite bear  
Away the Palm—yet shall it ever pay

Due Reverence to your most sovereign eyes.

### HYMN TO APOLLO

God of the golden bow,  
And of the golden lyre,  
And of the golden hair,  
And of the golden fire,  
Charioteer  
Of the patient year,  
Where—where slept thine ire,  
When like a blank idiot I put on thy wreath,  
Thy laurel, thy glory,  
The light of thy story,  
Or was I a worm—too low crawling, for death?  
O Delphic Apollo!

10

The Thunderer grasp'd and grasp'd,  
The Thunderer frown'd and frown'd;  
The eagle's feathery mane  
For wrath became stiffen'd—the sound  
Of breeding thunder  
Went drowsily under,  
Muttering to be unbound.  
O why didst thou pity, and for a worm  
Why touch thy soft lute  
Till the thunder was mute,  
Why was not I crush'd—such a pitiful germ?  
O Delphic Apollo!

20

The Pleiades were up,  
Watching the silent air;  
The seeds and roots in the Earth  
Were swelling for summer fare;  
The Ocean, its neighbour,  
Was at its old labour,  
When, who—who did dare  
To tie, like a madman, thy plant round his brow,  
And grin and look proudly,  
And blaspheme so loudly,  
And live for that honour, to stoop to thee now?  
O Delphic Apollo!

30





From little cares; to find, with easy quest,  
 A fragrant wild, with Nature's beauty drest,  
 And there into delight my soul deceive.  
 There warm my breast with patriotic lore,  
 Musing on Milton's fate—on Sydney's bier—  
 Till their stern forms before my mind arise:  
 Perhaps on wing of Poesy upsoar,  
 Full often dropping a delicious tear,  
 When some melodious sorrow spells mine eyes.

10

## SONNET

BEFORE he went to feed with owls and bats  
 Nebuchadnezzar had an ugly dream,  
 Worse than an Hus'if's when she thinks her cream  
 Made a Naumachia for mice and rats.  
 So scared, he sent for that "Good King of Cats"  
 Young Daniel, who soon did pluck away the beam  
 From out his eye, and said he did not deem  
 The sceptre worth a straw—his Cushions old door-mats.  
 A horrid nightmare similar somewhat  
 Of late has haunted a most motley crew,  
 Most loggerheads and Chapmen—we are told  
 That any Daniel tho' he be a sot  
 Can make the lying lips turn pale of hue  
 By belching out "ye are that head of Gold."

10

## SONNET

## WRITTEN IN DISGUST OF VULGAR SUPERSTITION

THE church bells toll a melancholy round,  
 Calling the people to some other prayers,  
 Some other gloominess, more dreadful cares,  
 More hearkening to the sermon's horrid sound.  
 Surely the mind of man is closely bound  
 In some black spell; seeing that each one tears  
 Himself from fireside joys, and Lydian airs,  
 And converse high of those with glory crown'd.  
 Still, still they toll, and I should feel a damp,—  
 A chill as from a tomb, did I not know  
 That they are dying like an outburnt lamp;  
 That 'tis their sighing, wailing ere they go  
 Into oblivion;—that fresh flowers will grow,  
 And many glories of immortal stamp.

10

SONNET

AFTER dark vapours have oppress'd our plains  
 For a long dreary season, comes a day  
 Born of the gentle South, and clears away  
 From the sick heavens all unseemly stains.  
 The anxious month, relieved of its pains,  
 Takes as a long-lost right the feel of May;  
 The eyelids with the passing coolness play  
 Like rose leaves with the drip of Summer rains.  
 The calmest thoughts come round us; as of leaves  
 Budding—fruit ripening in stillness—Autumn suns  
 Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves— 11  
 Sweet Sappho's cheek—a smiling infant's breath—  
 The gradual sand that through an hour-glass runs—  
 A woodland rivulet—a Poet's death.

SONNET

[*Written at the end of "The Floure and the Lefe"*]

THIS pleasant tale is like a little copse:  
 The honied lines do freshly interlace  
 To keep the reader in so sweet a place,  
 So that he here and there full-hearted stops;  
 And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops  
 Come cool and suddenly against his face,  
 And by the wandering melody may trace  
 Which way the tender-legged linnet hops.  
 Oh! what a power hath white Simplicity!  
 What mighty power has this gentle story! 10  
 I that for ever feel athirst for glory  
 Could at this moment be content to lie  
 Meekly upon the grass, as those whose sobbings  
 Were heard of none beside the mournful robins.

TWO SONNETS

I

TO HAYDON, WITH A SONNET WRITTEN ON SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES

HAYDON! forgive me that I cannot speak  
 Definitively on these mighty things;  
 Forgive me that I have not Eagle's wings—  
 That what I want I know not where to seek:  
 And think that I would not be over meek

K E A T S

In rolling out upfollow'd thunders,  
 Even to the steep of Heliconian springs,  
 Were I of ample strength for such a freak—  
 Think too, that all those numbers should be thine;  
 Whose else? In this who touch thy vesture's hem?  
 For when men star'd at what was most divine 11  
 With browless idiotism—o'erwise phlegm—  
 Thou hadst beheld the Hesperean shine  
 Of their star in the East, and gone to worship them.

II

ON SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES

My spirit is too weak—mortality  
 Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,  
 And each imagin'd pinnacle and steep  
 Of godlike hardship, tells me I must die  
 Like a sick Eagle looking at the sky.  
 Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep  
 That I have not the cloudy winds to keep,  
 Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.  
 Such dim-conceived glories of the brain  
 Bring round the heart an undescribable feud;  
 So do these wonders a most dizzy pain, 11  
 That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude  
 Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main—  
 A sun—a shadow of a magnitude.

SONNET

ON A PICTURE OF LEANDER

COME hither all sweet maidens soberly,  
 Down-looking aye, and with a chasten'd light,  
 Hid in the fringes of your eyelids white,  
 And meekly let your fair hands joined be,  
 As if so gentle that ye could not see,  
 Untouch'd, a victim of your beauty bright,  
 Sinking away to his young spirit's night,—  
 Sinking bewilder'd 'mid the dreary sea:  
 'Tis young Leander toiling to his death;  
 Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary lips 10  
 For Hero's cheek, and smiles against her smile.  
 O horrid dream! see how his body dips  
 Dead-heavy; arms and shoulders gleam awhile:  
 He's gone: up bubbles all his amorous breath!

TO ———

THINK not of it, sweet one, so;—  
 Give it not a tear;  
 Sigh thou mayst, and bid it go  
 Any, any where.

Do not look so sad, sweet one,—  
 Sad and fadingly;  
 Shed one drop, then it is gone,  
 O 'twas born to die.

Still so pale? then dearest weep;  
 Weep, I'll count the tears,  
 And each one shall be a bliss  
 For thee in after years.

10

Brighter has it left thine eyes  
 Than a sunny rill;  
 And thy whispering melodies  
 Are tenderer still.

Yet—as all things mourn awhile  
 At fleeting blisses,  
 Let us too! but be our dirge  
 A dirge of kisses.

20

LINES

I

UNFELT, unheard, unseen,  
 I've left my little queen,  
 Her languid arms in silver slumber lying:  
 Ah! through their nestling touch,  
 Who—who could tell how much  
 There is for madness—cruel, or complying?

II

Those faery lids how sleek!  
 Those lips how moist!—they speak,  
 In ripest quiet, shadows of sweet sounds:  
 Into my fancy's ear  
 Melting a burden dear,  
 How "Love doth know no fullness nor no bounds."

## III

True!—tender monitors!  
 I bend unto your laws:  
 This sweetest day for dalliance was born!  
 So, without more ado,  
 I'll feel my heaven anew,  
 For all the blushing of the hasty morn.

## SONNET

## ON THE SEA

It keeps eternal whisperings around  
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell  
 Gluts twice ten thousand Caverns, till the spell  
 Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.  
 Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,  
 That scarcely will the very smallest shell  
 Be mov'd for days from where it sometime fell,  
 When last the winds of Heaven were unbound.  
 Oh ye! who have your eye-balls vex'd and tir'd,  
 Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea; 10  
 Oh ye! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,  
 Or fed too much with cloying melody—  
 Sit ye near some old Cavern's Mouth, and brood  
 Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quir'd!

## SONNET

## ON LEIGH HUNT'S POEM "THE STORY OF RIMINI"

Who loves to peer up at the morning sun,  
 With half-shut eyes and comfortable cheek,  
 Let him, with this sweet tale, full often seek  
 For meadows where the little rivers run;  
 Who loves to linger with that brightest one  
 Of Heaven—Hesperus—let him lowly speak  
 These numbers to the night, and starlight meek,  
 Or moon, if that her hunting be begun.  
 He who knows these delights, and too is prone  
 To moralize upon a smile or tear, 10  
 Will find at once a region of his own,  
 A bower for his spirit, and will steer  
 To alleys where the fir-tree drops its cone,  
 Where robins hop, and fallen leaves are sear.

# ON OXFORD

## A PARODY

### I

THE Gothic looks solemn,  
The plain Doric column  
Supports an old Bishop and Crosier;  
The mouldering arch,  
Shaded o'er by a larch  
Stands next door to Wilson the Hosier.

### II

Vice—that is, by turns,—  
O'er pale faces mourns  
The black tassell'd trencher and common hat;  
The Chantry boy sings,  
The Steeple-bell rings,  
And as for the Chancellor—*dominat*.

### III

There are plenty of trees,  
And plenty of ease,  
And plenty of fat deer for Parsons;  
And when it is venison,  
Short is the benison,—  
Then each on a leg or thigh fastens.

## THE POET

### A FRAGMENT

WHERE's the Poet? show him! show him,  
Muses nine! that I may know him!  
'Tis the man who with a man  
Is an equal, be he King,  
Or poorest of the beggar-clan,  
Or any other wondrous thing  
A man may be 'twixt ape and Plato;  
'Tis the man who with a bird,  
Wren or Eagle, finds his way to  
All its instincts; he hath heard  
The Lion's roaring, and can tell  
What his horny throat expresseth,  
And to him the Tiger's yell  
Comes articulate and presseth  
On his ear like mother-tongue.

## MODERN LOVE

AND what is love? It is a doll dress'd up  
 For idleness to cosset, nurse, and dandle;  
 A thing of soft misnomers, so divine  
 That silly youth doth think to make itself  
 Divine by loving, and so goes on  
 Yawning and doting a whole summer long,  
 Till Miss's comb is made a pearl tiara,  
 And common Wellingtons turn Romeo boots;  
 Then Cleopatra lives at number seven,  
 And Antony resides in Brunswick Square. 10  
 Fools! if some passions high have warm'd the world,  
 If Queens and Soldiers have play'd deep for hearts,  
 It is no reason why such agonies  
 Should be more common than the growth of weeds.  
 Fools! make me whole again that weighty pearl  
 The Queen of Egypt melted, and I'll say  
 That ye may love in spite of beaver hats.

## THE CASTLE BUILDER

## FRAGMENTS OF A DIALOGUE

## CASTLE BUILDER

\* \* \* \* \*

IN short, convince you that however wise  
 You may have grown from Convent libraries,  
 I have, by many yards at least, been carding  
 A longer skein of wit in Convent garden.

## BERNARDINE

A very Eden that same place must be!  
 Pray what demesne? Whose Lordship's legacy?  
 What, have you convents in that Gothic Isle?  
 Pray pardon me, I cannot help but smile.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CASTLE BUILDER

Sir, Convent Garden is a monstrous beast  
 From morning, four o'clock, to twelve at noon, 10  
 It swallows cabbages without a spoon,  
 And then, from twelve till two, this Eden made is  
 A promenade for cooks and ancient ladies;



And then for supper, 'stead of soup and poaches,  
It swallows chairmen, damns, and Hackney coaches.  
In short, Sir, 'tis a very place for monks,  
For it containeth twenty thousand punks,  
Which any man may number for his sport,  
By following fat elbows up a court.

\* \* \* \* \*

In such like nonsense would I pass an hour 20  
With random Friar, or Rake upon his tour,  
Or one of few of that imperial host  
Who came unmaimed from the Russian frost

\* \* \* \* \*

To-night I'll have my friar—let me think  
About my room,—I'll have it in the pink;  
It should be rich and sombre, and the moon,  
Just in its mid-life in the midst of June,  
Should look thro' four large windows and display  
Clear, but for gold-fish vases in the way,  
Their glassy diamonding on Turkish floor; 30  
The tapers keep aside, an hour and more,  
To see what else the moon alone can show;  
While the night-breeze doth softly let us know  
My terrace is well bower'd with oranges.  
Upon the floor the dullest spirit sees  
A guitar-ribband and a lady's glove  
Beside a crumple-leaved tale of love;  
A tambour-frame, with Venus sleeping there,  
All finish'd but some ringlets of her hair;  
A viol-bow, strings torn, cross-wise upon 40  
A glorious folio of Anacreon;  
A skull upon a mat of roses lying,  
Ink'd purple with a song concerning dying;  
An hour-glass on the turn, amid the trails  
Of passion-flower;—just in time there sails  
A cloud across the moon,—the lights bring in!  
And see what more my phantasy can win.  
It is a gorgeous room, but somewhat sad;  
The draperies are so, as tho' they had  
Been made for Cleopatra's winding-sheet; 50  
And opposite the stedfast eye doth meet  
A spacious looking-glass, upon whose face,  
In letters raven-sombre, you may trace  
Old "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin."  
Greek busts and statuary have ever been  
Held, by the finest spirits, fitter far  
Than vase grotesque and Siamesian jar;

Therefore 'tis sure a want of Attic taste  
 That I should rather love a Gothic waste  
 Of eyesight on cinque-coloured potter's clay, 60  
 Than on the marble fairness of old Greece.  
 My table-coverlits of Jason's fleece  
 And black Numidian sheep-wool should be wrought,  
 Gold, black, and heavy, from the Lama brought.  
 My ebon sofas should delicious be  
 With down from Leda's cygnet progeny.  
 My pictures all Salvator's, save a few  
 Of Titian's portraiture, and one, though new,  
 Of Haydon's in its fresh magnificence.  
 My wine—O good! 'tis here at my desire, 70  
 And I must sit to supper with my friar.

\* \* \* \* \*

### A SONG OF OPPOSITES

"Under the flag  
 Of each his faction, they to battle bring  
 Their embryon atoms."—MILTON.

WELCOME joy, and welcome sorrow,  
 Lethe's weed and Hermes' feather;  
 Come to-day, and come to-morrow,  
 I do love you both together!  
 I love to mark sad faces in fair weather;  
 And hear a merry laugh amid the thunder;  
 Fair and foul I love together.  
 Meadows sweet where flames are under,  
 And a giggle at a wonder; 10  
 Visage sage at pantomime;  
 Funeral, and steeple-chime;  
 Infant playing with a skull;  
 Morning fair, and shipwreck'd hull;  
 Nightshade with the woodbine kissing;  
 Serpents in red roses hissing;  
 Cleopatra regal-dress'd  
 With the aspic at her breast;  
 Dancing music, music sad,  
 Both together, sane and mad;  
 Muses bright and muses pale; 20  
 Sombre Saturn, Momus hale;—  
 Laugh and sigh, and laugh again;  
 Oh the sweetness of the pain!  
 Muses bright, and muses pale,  
 Bare your faces of the veil;

Let me see; and let me write  
 Of the day, and of the night—  
 Both together:—let me slake  
 All my thirst for sweet heart-ache!  
 Let my bower be of yew, 30  
 Interwreath'd with myrtles new;  
 Pines and lime-trees full in bloom,  
 And my couch a low grass-tomb.

# SONNET

## TO A CAT

CAT! who hast pass'd thy grand climacteric,  
 How many mice and rats hast in thy days  
 Destroy'd?—How many tit bits stolen? Gaze  
 With those bright languid segments green, and prick  
 Those velvet ears—but pr'ythee do not stick  
 Thy latent talons in me—and upraise  
 Thy gentle mew—and tell me all thy frays  
 Of fish and mice, and rats and tender chick.  
 Nay, look not down, nor lick thy dainty wrists—  
 For all the wheezy asthma,—and for all 10  
 Thy tail's tip is nick'd off—and though the fists  
 Of many a maid have given thee many a maul,  
 Still is that fur as soft as when the lists  
 In youth thou enter'dst on glass bottled wall.

# LINES ON SEEING A LOCK OF MILTON'S HAIR

CHIEF of organic numbers!  
 Old Scholar of the Spheres!  
 Thy spirit never slumbers,  
 But rolls about our ears,  
 For ever, and for ever!  
 O what a mad endeavour  
 Worketh he,  
 Who to thy sacred and ennobled hearse  
 Would offer a burnt sacrifice of verse  
 And melody. 10

How heavenward thou soundest,  
 Live Temple of sweet noise,  
 And Discord unconfoundest,  
 Giving Delight new joys,  
 And Pleasure nobler pinions!  
 O, where are thy dominions?

Lend thine ear  
 To a young Delian oath,—aye, by thy soul,  
 By all that from thy mortal lips did roll,  
 And by the kernel of thine earthly love,  
 Beauty, in things on earth, and things above  
 I swear!

20

When every childish fashion  
 Has vanish'd from my rhyme,  
 Will I, grey-gone in passion,  
 Leave to an after-time,  
     Hymning and harmony  
 Of thee, and of thy works, and of thy life;  
 But vain is now the burning and the strife,  
 Pangs are in vain, until I grow high-rife  
     With old Philosophy,  
 And mad with glimpses of futurity!

30

For many years my offering must be hush'd;  
 When I do speak, I'll think upon this hour,  
 Because I feel my forehead hot and flush'd,  
 Even at the simplest vassal of thy power,—  
     A lock of thy bright hair,—  
     Sudden it came,  
 And I was startled, when I caught thy name  
     Coupled so unaware;  
 Yet, at the moment, temperate was my blood.  
 I thought I had beheld it from the flood.

40

## SONNET

ON SITTING DOWN TO READ KING LEAR ONCE AGAIN

O GOLDEN tongued Romance, with serene lute!  
 Fair plumed Syren, Queen of far-away!  
 Leave melodizing on this wintry day,  
 Shut up thine olden pages, and be mute:  
 Adieu! for, once again, the fierce dispute  
     Betwixt damnation and impassion'd clay  
 Must I burn through; once more humbly assay  
 The bitter-sweet of this Shakespearian fruit:  
 Chief Poet! and ye clouds of Albion,  
     Begetters of our deep eternal theme!  
 When through the old oak Forest I am gone,  
 Let me not wander in a barren dream,  
 But, when I am consumed in the fire,  
 Give me new Phœnix wings to fly at my desire.

10

SONNET

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be  
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,  
 Before high-piled books, in charactery,  
 Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain;  
 When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,  
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
 And think that I may never live to trace  
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;  
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,  
 That I shall never look upon thee more,  
 Never have relish in the faery power  
 Of unreflecting love;—then on the shore  
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think  
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

10

SHARING EVE'S APPLE

I

O BLUSH not so! O blush not so!  
 Or I shall think you knowing;  
 And if you smile the blushing while,  
 Then maidenheads are going.

II

There's a blush for won't, and a blush for shan't,  
 And a blush for having done it:  
 There's a blush for thought and a blush for naught,  
 And a blush for just begun it.

III

O sigh not so! O sigh not so!  
 For it sounds of Eve's sweet pippin;  
 By these loosen'd lips you have tasted the pips  
 And fought in an amorous nipping.

IV

Will you play once more at nice-cut-core,  
 For it only will last our youth out,  
 And we have the prime of the kissing time,  
 We have not one sweet tooth out.

## V

There's a sigh for yes, and a sigh for no,  
 And a sigh for I can't bear it!  
 O what can be done, shall we stay or run?  
 O cut the sweet apple and share it!

## A DRAUGHT OF SUNSHINE

HENCE Burgundy, Claret, and Port,  
 Away with old Hock and Madeira,  
 Too earthly ye are for my sport;  
 There's a beverage brighter and clearer.  
 Instead of a pitiful rummer,  
 My wine overbrims a whole summer;  
 My bowl is the sky,  
 And I drink at my eye,  
 Till I feel in the brain  
 A Delphian pain—

10

Then follow, my Caius! then follow:

On the green of the hill  
 We will drink our fill  
 Of golden sunshine,  
 Till our brains intertwine  
 With the glory and grace of Apollo!  
 God of the Meridian,  
 And of the East and West,  
 To thee my soul is flown,  
 And my body is earthward press'd.—

20

It is an awful mission,  
 A terrible division;  
 And leaves a gulph austere  
 To be fill'd with worldly fear.  
 Aye, when the soul is fled  
 To high above our head,  
 Affrighted do we gaze  
 After its airy maze,  
 As doth a mother wild,  
 When her young infant child  
 Is in an eagle's claws—

30

And is not this the cause  
 Of madness?—God of Song,  
 Thou bearest me along  
 Through sights I scarce can bear:  
 O let me, let me share

With the hot lyre and thee,  
 The staid Philosophy.  
 Temper my lonely hours,  
 And let me see thy bowers  
 More unalarm'd! 40

# SONNET

## TO THE NILE

Son of the old moon-mountains African!  
 Chief of the Pyramid and Crocodile!  
 We call thee fruitful, and, that very while,  
 A desert fills our seeing's inward span;  
 Nurse of swart nations since the world began,  
 Art thou so fruitful? or dost thou beguile  
 Such men to honour thee, who, worn with toil,  
 Rest for a space 'twixt Cairo and Decan?  
 O may dark fancies err! they surely do;  
 'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste 10  
 Of all beyond itself, thou dost bedew  
 Green rushes like our rivers, and dost taste  
 The pleasant sun-rise, green isles hast thou too,  
 And to the sea as happily dost haste.

# SONNET

## TO A LADY SEEN FOR A FEW MOMENTS AT VAUXHALL

TIME's sea hath been five years at its slow ebb,  
 Long hours have to and fro let creep the sand,  
 Since I was tangled in thy beauty's web,  
 And snared by the ungloving of thine hand.  
 And yet I never look on midnight sky,  
 But I behold thine eyes' well memory'd light;  
 I cannot look upon the rose's dye,  
 But to thy cheek my soul doth take its flight.  
 I cannot look on any budding flower,  
 But my fond ear, in fancy at thy lips 10  
 And hearkening for a love-sound, doth devour  
 Its sweets in the wrong sense:—Thou dost eclipse  
 Every delight with sweet remembering,  
 And grief unto my darling joys dost bring

## SONNET

WRITTEN IN ANSWER TO A SONNET ENDING THUS:—

Dark eyes are dearer far  
Than those that mock the hyacinthine bell—

By J. H. REYNOLDS.

BLUE! 'Tis the life of heaven,—the domain  
Of Cynthia,—the wide palace of the sun,—  
The tent of Hesperus, and all his train,—  
The bosomer of clouds, gold, grey and dun.  
Blue! 'Tis the life of waters:—Ocean  
And all its vassal streams, pools numberless,  
May rage, and foam, and fret, but never can  
Subside, if not to dark blue nativeness.  
Blue! Gentle cousin of the forest-green,  
Married to green in all the sweetest flowers,—  
Forget-me-not,—the Blue bell,—and, that Queen  
Of secrecy, the Violet: what strange powers  
Hast thou, as a mere shadow! But how great,  
When in an Eye thou art, alive with fate!

10

## SONNET

TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS

O THAT a week could be an age, and we  
Felt parting and warmth meeting every week,  
Then one poor year a thousand years would be,  
The flush of welcome ever on the cheek:  
So could we live long life in little space,  
So time itself would be annihilate,  
So a day's journey in oblivious haze  
To serve our joys would lengthen and dilate.  
O to arrive each Monday morn from Ind!  
To land each Tuesday from the rich Levant!  
In little time a host of joys to bind,  
And keep our souls in one eternal pant!  
This morn, my friend, and yester-evening taught  
Me how to harbour such a happy thought.

10

## WHAT THE THRUSH SAID

LINES FROM A LETTER TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS

O THOU whose face hath felt the Winter's wind,  
Whose eye has seen the snow-clouds hung in mist,



And the black elm tops 'mong the freezing stars,  
 To thee the spring will be a harvest-time.  
 O thou, whose only book has been the light  
 Of supreme darkness which thou feddest on  
 Night after night when Phœbus was away,  
 To thee the Spring shall be a triple morn.  
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none,  
 And yet my song comes native with the warmth.  
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none, 11  
 And yet the Evening listens. He who saddens  
 At thought of idleness cannot be idle,  
 And he's awake who thinks himself asleep.

## SONNET

### THE HUMAN SEASONS

FOUR seasons fill the measure of the year;  
 There are four seasons in the mind of man:  
 He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear  
 Takes in all beauty with an easy span:  
 He has his Summer, when luxuriously  
 Spring's honied cud of youthful thought he loves  
 To ruminate, and by such dreaming nigh  
 His nearest unto heaven: quiet coves  
 His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings 10  
 He furleth close; contented so to look  
 On mists in idleness—to let fair things  
 Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.  
 He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,  
 Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

### EXTRACTS FROM AN OPERA

O! WERE I one of the Olympian twelve,  
 Their godships should pass this into a law,—  
 That when a man doth set himself in toil  
 After some beauty veiled far away,  
 Each step he took should make his lady's hand  
 More soft, more white, and her fair cheek more fair;  
 And for each briar-berry he might eat,  
 A kiss should bud upon the tree of love,  
 And pulp and ripen richer every hour,  
 To melt away upon the traveller's lips. 10

## K E A T S

## DAISY'S SONG

## I

The sun, with his great eye,  
Sees not so much as I;  
And the moon, all silver-proud,  
Might as well be in a cloud.

## II

And O the spring—the spring!  
I lead the life of a king!  
Couch'd in the teeming grass,  
I spy each pretty lass.

## III

I look where no one dares,  
And I stare where no one stares,  
And when the night is nigh,  
Lambs bleat my lullaby.

\* \* \* \* \*

## FOLLY'S SONG

When wedding fiddles are a-playing,  
Huzza for folly O!  
And when maidens go a-maying,  
Huzza, &c.  
When a milk-pail is upset,  
Huzza, &c.  
And the clothes left in the wet,  
Huzza, &c.  
When the barrel's set abroach,  
Huzza, &c.  
When Kate Eyebrow keeps a coach,  
Huzza, &c.  
When the pig is over-roasted,  
Huzza, &c.  
And the cheese is over-toasted,  
Huzza, &c.  
When Sir Snap is with his lawyer,  
Huzza, &c.  
And Miss Chip has kissed the sawyer,  
Huzza, &c.

10

20

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh, I am frighten'd with most hateful thoughts!  
 Perhaps her voice is not a nightingale's,  
 Perhaps her teeth are not the fairest pearl;  
 Her eye-lashes may be, for aught I know,  
 Not longer than the May-fly's small fan-horns;  
 There may not be one dimple on her hand;  
 And freckles many; ah! a careless nurse,  
 In haste to teach the little thing to walk,  
 May have crumpt up a pair of Dian's legs,  
 And warpt the ivory of a Juno's neck.

\* \* \* \* \*

SONG

I

The stranger lighted from his steed,  
 And ere he spake a word,  
 He seiz'd my lady's lilly hand,  
 And kiss'd it all unheard.

II

The stranger walk'd into the hall,  
 And ere he spake a word,  
 He kissed my lady's cherry lips,  
 And kiss'd 'em all unheard.

III

The stranger walk'd into the bower,—  
 But my lady first did go,—  
 Aye hand in hand into the bower,  
 Where my lord's roses blow.

IV

My lady's maid had a silken scarf,  
 And a golden ring had she,  
 And a kiss from the stranger, as off he went  
 Again on his fair palfrey.

\* \* \* \* \*

Asleep! O sleep a little while, white pearl!  
 And let me kneel, and let me pray to thee,  
 And let me call Heaven's blessing on thine eyes,  
 And let me breathe into the happy air,  
 That doth enfold and touch thee all about,  
 Vows of my slavery, my giving up,  
 My sudden adoration, my great love!

## FAERY SONGS

## I

SHED no tear—O shed no tear!  
 The flower will bloom another year.  
 Weep no more—O weep no more!  
 Young buds sleep in the root's white core.  
 Dry your eyes—O dry your eyes,  
 For I was taught in Paradise  
 To ease my breast of melodies—  
       Shed no tear.

Overhead—look overhead  
 'Mong the blossoms white and red—  
 Look up, look up—I flutter now  
 On this flush pomegranate bough—  
 See me—'tis this silvery bill  
 Ever cures the good man's ill—  
 Shed no tear—O shed no tear!  
 The flower will bloom another year.  
 Adieu—Adieu—I fly, adieu,  
 I vanish in the heaven's blue—  
       Adieu, Adieu!

10

## II

Ah! woe is me! poor silver-wing!  
       That I must chant thy lady's dirge,  
 And death to this fair haunt of spring,  
       Of melody, and streams of flowery verge,—  
 Poor silver-wing! ah! woe is me!  
       That I must see  
 These blossoms snow upon thy lady's pall!  
       Go, pretty page! and in her ear  
       Whisper that the hour is near!  
       Softly tell her not to fear  
 Such calm favonian burial!  
       Go, pretty page! and soothly tell,—  
       The blossoms hang by a melting spell,  
 And fall they must, ere a star wink thrice  
       Upon her closed eyes,  
 That now in vain are weeping their last tears,  
       At sweet life leaving, and these arbours green,—  
 Rich dowry from the Spirit of the Spheres,—  
       Alas! poor Queen!

10

SONNET

TO HOMER

STANDING aloof in giant ignorance,  
 Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,  
 As one who sits ashore and longs perchance  
 To visit dolphin-coral in deep seas.  
 So thou wast blind;—but then the veil was rent,  
 For Jove uncurtain'd Heaven to let thee live,  
 And Neptune made for thee a spumy tent,  
 And Pan made sing for thee his forest-hive;  
 Aye on the shores of darkness there is light,  
 And precipices show untrodden green,  
 There is a budding morrow in midnight,  
 There is a triple sight in blindness keen;  
 Such seeing hadst thou, as it once befel  
 To Dian, Queen of Earth, and Heaven, and Hell.

10

SONG

[*Written on a blank page in Beaumont and Fletcher's Works, between  
 "Cupid's Revenge" and "The Two Noble Kinsmen"*]

I

SPIRIT here that reignest!  
 Spirit here that painest!  
 Spirit here that burnest!  
 Spirit here that mournest!  
 Spirit, I bow  
 My forehead low,  
 Enshaded with thy pinions.  
 Spirit, I look  
 All passion-struck  
 Into thy pale dominions.

II

Spirit here that laughest!  
 Spirit here that quaffest!  
 Spirit here that dancest!  
 Noble soul that prancest!  
 Spirit, with thee  
 I join in the glee  
 A-nudging the elbow of Momus.  
 Spirit, I flush  
 With a Bacchanal blush  
 Just fresh from the Banquet of Comus.

## TEIGNMOUTH

"SOME DOGGEREL" SENT IN A LETTER TO B. R. HAYDON

## I

HERE all the summer could I stay,  
For there's Bishop's teign  
And King's teign  
And Coomb at the clear teign head—  
Where close by the stream  
You may have your cream  
All spread upon barley bread.

## II

There's arch Brook  
And there's larch Brook  
Both turning many a mill;  
And cooling the drouth  
Of the salmon's mouth,  
And fattening his silver gill.

## III

There is Wild wood,  
A Mild hood  
To the sheep on the lea o' the down,  
Where the golden furze,  
With its green, thin spurs,  
Doth catch at the maiden's gown.

## IV

There is Newton marsh  
With its spear grass harsh—  
A pleasant summer level  
Where the maidens sweet  
Of the Market Street,  
Do meet in the dusk to revel.

## V

There's the Barton rich  
With dyke and ditch  
And hedge for the thrush to live in  
And the hollow tree  
For the buzzing bee  
And a bank for the wasp to hive in.

VI

And O, and O  
 The daisies blow  
 And the primroses are waken'd,  
 And violets white  
 Sit in silver plight,  
 And the green bud's as long as the spike end.

VII

Then who would go  
 Into dark Soho,  
 And chatter with dack'd hair'd critics,  
 When he can stay  
 For the new-mown hay,  
 And startle the dappled Prickets?

THE DEVON MAID

STANZAS SENT IN A LETTER TO B. R. HAYDON

I

WHERE be ye going, you Devon Maid?  
 And what have ye there in the Basket?  
 Ye tight little fairy just fresh from the dairy,  
 Will ye give me some cream if I ask it?

II

I love your Meads, and I love your flowers,  
 And I love your junkets mainly,  
 But 'hind the door I love kissing more,  
 O look not so disdainly.

III

I love your hills, and I love your dales,  
 And I love your flocks a-bleating—  
 But O, on the heather to lie together,  
 With both our hearts a-beating!

IV

I'll put your Basket all safe in a nook,  
 Your shawl I hang up on the willow,  
 And we will sigh in the daisy's eye  
 And kiss on a grass green pillow.

## EPISTLE TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS

DEAR Reynolds! as last night I lay in bed,  
 There came before my eyes that wonted thread  
 Of shapes, and shadows, and remembrances,  
 That every other minute vex and please:  
 Things all disjointed come from north and south,—  
 Two Witch's eyes above a Cherub's mouth,  
 Voltaire with casque and shield and habergeon,  
 And Alexander with his nightcap on;  
 Old Socrates a-tying his cravat,  
 And Hazlitt playing with Miss Edgeworth's cat; 10  
 And Junius Brutus, pretty well so so,  
 Making the best of's way towards Soho.

Few are there who escape these visitings,—  
 Perhaps one or two whose lives have patent wings,  
 And thro' whose curtains peeps no hellish nose,  
 No wild-boar tushes, and no Mermaid's toes;  
 But flowers bursting out with lusty pride,  
 And young Æolian harps personified;  
 Some Titian colours touch'd into real life,—  
 The sacrifice goes on; the pontiff knife 20  
 Gleams in the Sun, the milk-white heifer lows,  
 The pipes go shrilly, the libation flows:  
 A white sail shows above the green-head cliff,  
 Moves round the point, and throws her anchor stiff;  
 The mariners join hymn with those on land.

You know the Enchanted Castle,—it doth stand  
 Upon a rock, on the border of a Lake,  
 Nested in trees, which all do seem to shake  
 From some old magic-like Urganda's Sword.  
 O Phœbus! that I had thy sacred word 30  
 To show this Castle, in fair dreaming wise,  
 Unto my friend, while sick and ill he lies!

You know it well enough, where it doth seem  
 A mossy place, a Merlin's Hall, a dream;  
 You know the clear Lake, and the little Isles,  
 The mountains blue, and cold near neighbour rills,  
 All which elsewhere are but half animate;  
 There do they look alive to love and hate,  
 To smiles and frowns; they seem a lifted mound  
 Above some giant, pulsing underground. 40



Part of the Building was a chosen See,  
 Built by a banish'd Santon of Chaldee;  
 The other part, two thousand years from him,  
 Was built by Cuthbert de Saint Aldebrim;  
 Then there's a little wing, far from the Sun,  
 Built by a Lapland Witch turn'd maudlin Nun;  
 And many other juts of aged stone  
 Founded with many a mason-devil's groan.

The doors all look as if they op'd themselves,  
 The windows as if latch'd by Fays and Elves, 50  
 And from them comes a silver flash of light,  
 As from the westward of a Summer's night;  
 Or like a beauteous woman's large blue eyes  
 Gone mad thro' olden songs and poesies.

See! what is coming from the distance dim!  
 A golden Galley all in silken trim!  
 Three rows of oars are lightening, moment whiles,  
 Into the verd'rous bosoms of those isles;  
 Towards the shade, under the Castle wall,  
 It comes in silence,—now 'tis hidden all. 60  
 The Clarion sounds, and from a Postern-gate  
 An echo of sweet music doth create  
 A fear in the poor Herdsman, who doth bring  
 His beasts to trouble the enchanted spring,—  
 He tells of the sweet music, and the spot,  
 To all his friends, and they believe him not.

O that our dreamings all, of sleep or wake,  
 Would all their colours from the sunset take:  
 From something of material sublime,  
 Rather than shadow our own soul's day-time 70  
 In the dark void of night. For in the world  
 We jostle,—but my flag is not unfurl'd  
 On the Admiral-staff,—and so philosophize  
 I dare not yet! Oh, never will the prize,  
 High reason, and the love of good and ill,  
 Be my award! Things cannot to the will  
 Be settled, but they tease us out of thought;  
 Or is it that imagination brought  
 Beyond its proper bound, yet still confin'd,  
 Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind, 80  
 Cannot refer to any standard law  
 Of either earth or heaven? It is a flaw  
 In happiness, to see beyond our bourn,—  
 It forces us in summer skies to mourn,  
 It spoils the singing of the Nightingale.

Dear Reynolds! I have a mysterious tale,  
 And cannot speak it: the first page I read  
 Upon a Lampit rock of green sea-weed  
 Among the breakers; 'twas a quiet eve,  
 The rocks were silent, the wide sea did weave 90  
 An untumultuous fringe of silver foam  
 Along the flat brown sand; I was at home  
 And should have been most happy,—but I saw  
 Too far into the sea, where every maw  
 The greater on the less feeds evermore.—  
 But I saw too distinct into the core  
 Of an eternal fierce destruction,  
 And so from happiness I far was gone.  
 Still am I sick of it, and tho', to-day,  
 I've gather'd young spring-leaves, and flowers gay  
 Of periwinkle and wild strawberry, 101  
 Still do I that most fierce destruction see,—  
 The Shark at savage prey,—the Hawk at pounce,—  
 The gentle Robin, like a Pard or Ounce,  
 Ravening a worm,—Away, ye horrid moods!  
 Moods of one's mind! You know I hate them well.  
 You know I'd sooner be a clapping Bell  
 To some Kamtschatcan Missionary Church,  
 Than with these horrid moods be left i' the lurch.

## DAWLISH FAIR

OVER the Hill and over the Dale,  
 And over the Bourne to Dawlish,  
 Where ginger-bread wives have a scanty sale,  
 And ginger-bread nuts are smallish.

 FRAGMENT OF AN ODE TO MAIA, WRITTEN ON  
 MAY DAY, 1818

MOTHER of Hermes! and still youthful Maia!  
 May I sing to thee  
 As thou wast hymned on the shores of Baia?  
 Or may I woo thee  
 In earlier Sicilian? or thy smiles  
 Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,  
 By bards who died content on pleasant sward,  
 Leaving great verse unto a little clan?  
 O, give me their old vigour, and unheard  
 Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span

Of heaven and few ears,  
 Rounded by thee, my song should die away  
 Content as theirs,  
 Rich in the simple worship of a day.

# ACROSTIC

GEORGIANA AUGUSTA KEATS

GIVE me your patience Sister while I frame  
 Exact in Capitals your golden name  
 Or sue the fair Apollo and he will  
 Rouse from his heavy slumber and instil  
 Great love in me for thee and Poesy.  
 Imagine not that greatest mastery  
 And kingdom over all the Realms of verse  
 Nears more to Heaven in aught than when we nurse  
 And surety give to love and Brotherhood.

Anthropophagi in Othello's mood; 10  
 Ulysses stormed, and his enchanted belt  
 Glow with the Muse, but they are never felt  
 Unbosom'd so and so eternal made,  
 Such tender incense in their Laurel shade,  
 To all the regent sisters of the Nine  
 As this poor offering to you, sister mine.

Kind sister! aye, this third name says you are;  
 Enchanted has it been the Lord knows where.  
 And may it taste to you like good old wine,  
 Take you to real happiness and give 20  
 Sons, daughters and a home like honied hive.

# SONNET

ON VISITING THE TOMB OF BURNS

THE town, the churchyard, and the setting sun,  
 The clouds, the trees, the rounded hills all seem,  
 Though beautiful, cold—strange—as in a dream,  
 I dreamed long ago, now new begun.  
 The short-liv'd, paly Summer is but won  
 From Winter's ague, for one hour's gleam;  
 Though sapphire-warm, their stars do never beam:  
 All is cold Beauty; pain is never done:

For who has mind to relish, Minos-wise,  
 The Real of Beauty, free from that dead hue  
 Sickly imagination and sick pride  
 Cast wan upon it! Burns! with honour due  
 I oft have honour'd thee. Great shadow, hide  
 Thy face; I sin against thy native skies.

### MEG MERRILIES

#### I

OLD MEG she was a Gipsy,  
 And liv'd upon the Moors:  
 Her bed it was the brown heath turf,  
 And her house was out of doors.

#### II

Her apples were swart blackberries,  
 Her currants pods o' broom;  
 Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,  
 Her book a churchyard tomb.

#### III

Her Brothers were the craggy hills,  
 Her Sisters larchen trees—  
 Alone with her great family  
 She liv'd as she did please.

#### IV

No breakfast had she many a morn,  
 No dinner many a noon,  
 And 'stead of supper she would stare  
 Full hard against the Moon.

#### V

But every morn of woodbine fresh  
 She made her garlanding,  
 And every night the dark glen Yew  
 She wove, and she would sing.

#### VI

And with her fingers old and brown  
 She plaited Mats o' Rushes,  
 And gave them to the Cottagers  
 She met among the Bushes.

VII

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen  
 And tall as Amazon:  
 And old red blanket cloak she wore;  
 A chip hat had she on.  
 God rest her aged bones somewhere—  
 She died full long ago!

A SONG ABOUT MYSELF

FROM A LETTER TO FANNY KEATS

I

THERE was naughty Boy,  
 A naughty boy was he,  
 He would not stop at home,  
 He could not quiet be—  
 He took  
 In his Knapsack  
 A Book  
 Full of vowels  
 And a shirt  
 With some towels—  
 A slight cap  
 For night cap—  
 A hair brush,  
 Comb ditto,  
 New Stockings  
 For old ones  
 Would split O!  
 This Knapsack  
 Tight at's back  
 He rivetted close  
 And followed his Nose  
 To the North,  
 To the North,  
 And follow'd his nose  
 To the North.

II

There was a naughty boy  
 And a naughty boy was he,  
 For nothing would he do  
 But scribble poetry—  
 He took

An ink stand

In his hand  
 And a pen  
 Big as ten  
 In the other.  
 And away  
 In a Pother  
 He ran  
 To the mountains  
 And fountains  
 And ghosts  
 And Postes  
 And witches  
 And ditches  
 And wrote  
 In his coat  
 When the weather  
 Was cool,  
 Fear of gout,  
 And without  
 When the weather  
 Was warm—  
 Och the charm  
 When we choose  
 To follow one's nose  
 To the north,  
 To the north,  
 To follow one's nose  
 To the north!

III

There was a naughty boy  
 And a naughty boy was he,  
 He kept little fishes  
 In washing tubs three

In spite  
 Of the might  
 Of the Maid  
 Nor afraid  
 Of his Granny-good—  
 He often would  
 Hurly burly  
 Get up early  
 And go  
 By hook or crook  
 To the brook  
 And bring home  
 Miller's thumb,  
 Tittlebat  
 Not over fat,  
 Minnows small  
 As the stall  
 Of a glove,  
 Not above  
 The size  
 Of a nice  
 Little Baby's  
 Little fingers—  
 O he made  
 'Twas his trade  
 Of Fish a pretty Kettle  
 A Kettle—  
 A Kettle

Of Fish a pretty Kettle  
 A Kettle!

## IV

There was a naughty Boy,  
 And a naughty Boy was he,  
 He ran away to Scotland  
 The people for to see—  
 Then he found  
 That the ground  
 Was as hard,  
 That a yard  
 Was as long,  
 That a song  
 Was as merry,  
 That a cherry  
 Was as red—  
 That lead  
 Was as weighty,  
 That fourscore  
 Was as eighty,  
 That a door  
 Was as wooden  
 As in England—  
 So he stood in his shoes  
 And he wonder'd,  
 He wonder'd,  
 He stood in his shoes  
 And he wonder'd.

## A GALLOWAY SONG

FROM A LETTER TO TOM KEATS

AH! ken ye what I met the day  
 Out oore the Mountains  
 A coming down by craggi[e]s grey  
 And mossie fountains—  
 A [h] goud hair'd Marie yeve I pray  
 Ane minute's guessing—  
 For that I met upon the way  
 Is past expressing.  
 As I stood where a rocky brig  
 A torrent crosses  
 I spied upon a misty rig  
 A troup o' Horses—

And as they trotted down the glen  
 I sped to meet them  
 To see if I might know the Men  
 To stop and greet them.  
 First Willie on his sleek mare came  
 At canting gallop  
 His long hair rustled like a flame  
 On board a shallop. 20  
 Then came his brother Rab and then  
 Young Peggy's mither  
 And Peggy too—adown the glen  
 They went together—  
 I saw her wrappit in her hood  
 Fra wind and raining—  
 Her cheek was flush wi' timid blood  
 Twixt growth and waning—  
 She turn'd her dazed head full oft  
 For there her Brithers 30  
 Came riding with her Bridegroom soft  
 And mony ithers.  
 Young Tam came up an' eyed me quick  
 With reddened cheek—  
 Braw Tam was daffed like a chick—  
 He coud na speak—  
 Ah Marie they are all gane hame  
 Through blustering weather  
 An' every heart is full on flame  
 An' light as feather. 40  
 Ah! Marie they are all gone hame  
 Fra happy wedding,  
 Whilst I—Ah is it not a shame?  
 Sad tears am shedding.

# SONNET

TO AILSA ROCK

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean pyramid!  
 Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowls' screams!  
 When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?  
 When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid?  
 How long is't since the mighty power bid  
 Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?  
 Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,  
 Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid.  
 Thou answer'st not; for thou art dead asleep;  
 Thy life is but two dead eternities— 16

The last in air, the former in the deep;  
 First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies—  
 Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,  
 Another cannot wake thy giant size.

## SONNET

WRITTEN IN THE COTTAGE WHERE BURNS WAS BORN

THIS mortal body of a thousand days  
 Now fills, O Burns, a space in thine own room,  
 Where thou didst dream alone on budded bays,  
 Happy and thoughtless of thy day of doom!  
 My pulse is warm with thine own Barley-bree,  
 My head is light with pledging a great soul,  
 My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,  
 Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal;  
 Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,  
 Yet can I ope thy window-sash to find  
 The meadow thou hast tramped o'er and o'er,—  
 Yet can I think of thee till thought is blind,—  
 Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name,—  
 O smile among the shades, for this is fame!

LINES WRITTEN IN THE HIGHLANDS AFTER A  
 VISIT TO BURNS'S COUNTRY

THERE is a charm in footing slow across a silent plain,  
 Where patriot battle has been fought, where glory had the gain;  
 There is a pleasure on the heath where Druids old have been,  
 Where mantles grey have rustled by and swept the nettles green;  
 There is a joy in every spot made known by times of old,  
 New to the feet, although each tale a hundred times be told;  
 There is a deeper joy than all, more solemn in the heart,  
 More parching to the tongue than all, of more divine a smart,  
 When weary steps forget themselves upon a pleasant turf,  
 Upon hot sand, or flinty road, or sea-shore iron scurf,  
 Toward the castle or the cot, where long ago was born  
 One who was great through mortal days, and died of fame unshorn,  
 Light heather-bells may tremble then, but they are far away;  
 Wood-lark may sing from sandy fern,—the Sun may hear his lay;  
 Runnels may kiss the grass on shelves and shallows clear,  
 But their low voices are not heard, though come on travels drear;  
 Blood-red the Sun may set behind black mountain peaks;  
 Blue tides may sluice and drench their time in caves and weedy creeks;  
 Eagles may seem to sleep wing-wide upon the air;  
 Ring-doves may fly convuls'd across to some high-cedar'd lair;



But the forgotten eye is still fast lidded to the ground,  
 As Palmer's, that with weariness, mid-desert shrine hath found.  
 At such a time the soul's a child, in childhood is the brain;  
 Forgotten is the worldly heart—alone, it beats in vain.—  
 Aye, if a madman could have leave to pass a healthful day  
 To tell his forehead's swoon and faint when first began decay,  
 He might make tremble many a one whose spirit had gone forth  
 To find a Bard's low cradle-place about the silent North!  
 Scanty the hour and few the steps beyond the bourn of care,  
 Beyond the sweet and bitter world,—beyond it unware! 30  
 Scanty the hour and few the steps, because a longer stay  
 Would bar return, and make a man forget his mortal way:  
 O horrible! to lose the sight of well remember'd face,  
 Of Brother's eyes, of Sister's brow—constant to every place;  
 Filling the air, as on we move, with portraiture intense;  
 More warm than those heroic tints that pain a painter's sense,  
 When shapes of old come striding by, and visages of old,  
 Locks shining black, hair scanty grey, and passions manifold.  
 No, no, that horror cannot be, for at the cable's length  
 Man feels the gentle anchor pull and gladdens in its strength:— 40  
 One hour, half-idiot, he stands by mossy waterfall,  
 But in the very next he reads his soul's memorial:—  
 He reads it on the mountain's height, where chance he may sit down  
 Upon rough marble diadem—that hill's eternal crown.  
 Yet be his anchor e'er so fast, room is there for a prayer  
 That man may never lose his mind on mountains black and bare;  
 That he may stray league after league some great birthplace to find  
 And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward sight unblind.

## THE GADFLY

FROM A LETTER TO TOM KEATS

### I

ALL gentle folks who owe a grudge  
 To any living thing  
 Open your ears and stay your  
 t[r]udge  
 Whilst I in dudgeon sing.

### III

Has any here an old grey Mare  
 With three legs all her store,  
 O put it to her Buttocks bare  
 And straight she'll run on four.

### II

The Gadfly he hath stung me  
 sore—  
 O may he ne'er sting you!  
 But we have many a horrid bore  
 He may sting black and blue.

### IV

Has any here a Lawyer suit  
 Of Seventeen-Forty-Three,  
 Take Lawyer's nose and put it to't  
 And you the end will see.

## V

Is there a Man in Parliament  
 Dum[b-]founder'd in his  
 speech,  
 O let his neighbour make a rent  
 And put one in his breech.

## VI

O Lowther how much better thou  
 Hadst figur'd t'other day  
 When to the folks thou mad'st a  
 bow  
 And hadst no more to say

## VII

If lucky Gadfly had but ta'en  
 His seat \* \* \*  
 And put thee to a little pain  
 To save thee from a worse.

## VIII

Better than Southey it had been,  
 Better than Mr. D——,  
 Better than Wordsworth too, I  
 ween,  
 Better than Mr. V——.

## IX

Forgive me pray good people all  
 For deviating so—  
 In spirit sure I had a call—  
 And now I on will go.

## X

Has any here a daughter fair  
 Too fond of reading novels,  
 Too apt to fall in love with care  
 And charming Mister Lovels,

## XI

O put a Gadfly to that thing  
 She keeps so white and pert—  
 I mean the finger for the ring,  
 And it will breed a wort.

## XII

Has any here a pious spouse  
 Who seven times a day  
 Scolds as King David pray'd, to  
 chouse  
 And have her holy way—

## XIII

O let a Gadfly's little sting  
 Persuade her sacred tongue  
 That noises are a common thing  
 But that her bell has rung.

## XIV

And as this is the summum bo-  
 num of all conquering,  
 I leave "withouten wordes mo"  
 The Gadfly's little sting.

## SONNET

ON HEARING THE BAG-PIPE AND SEEING "THE  
 STRANGER" PLAYED AT INVERARY

OF late two dainties were before me plac'd  
 Sweet, holy, pure, sacred and innocent,  
 From the ninth sphere to me benignly sent  
 That Gods might know my own particular taste.  
 First the soft Bag-pipe mourn'd with zealous haste,

The Stranger next with head on bosom bent  
 Sigh'd; rueful again the piteous Bag-pipe went,  
 Again the Stranger sighings fresh did waste.  
 O Bag-pipe thou didst steal my heart away—  
 O Stranger thou my nerves from Pipe didst charm—  
 O Bag-pipe thou didst re-assert thy sway— 11  
 Again thou Stranger gav'st me fresh alarm—  
 Alas! I could not choose. Ah! my poor heart,  
 Mum chance art thou with both oblig'd to part.

### STAFFA

Nor Aladdin magian  
 Ever such a work began;  
 Not the wizard of the Dee  
 Ever such a dream could see;  
 Not St. John, in Patmos' Isle,  
 In the passion of his toil,  
 When he saw the churches seven,  
 Golden aisl'd, built up in heaven,  
 Gaz'd at such a rugged wonder. 10  
 As I stood its roofing under,  
 Lo! I saw one sleeping there,  
 On the marble cold and bare.  
 While the surges wash'd his feet,  
 And his garments white did beat  
 Drench'd about the sombre rocks,  
 On his neck his well-grown locks,  
 Lifted dry above the main,  
 Were upon the curl again.  
 "What is this? and what art thou?"  
 Whisper'd I, and touch'd his brow; 20  
 "What art thou? and what is this?"  
 Whisper'd I, and strove to kiss  
 The spirit's hand, to wake his eyes;  
 Up he started in a trice:  
 "I am Lycidas," said he,  
 "Fam'd in funeral minstrelsy!  
 This was architectur'd thus  
 By the great Oceanus!—  
 Here his mighty waters play  
 Hollow organs all the day; 30  
 Here by turns his dolphins all,  
 Finny palmers great and small,  
 Come to pay devotion due—  
 Each a mouth of pearls must strew.

## K E A T S

Many a mortal of these days,  
 Dares to pass our sacred ways,  
 Dares to touch audaciously  
 This Cathedral of the Sea!  
 I have been the pontiff-priest  
 Where the waters never rest,  
 Where a fledgy sea-bird choir  
 Soars for ever; holy fire  
 I have hid from mortal man;  
 Proteus is my Sacristan.  
 But the dulled eye of mortal  
 Hath pass'd beyond the rocky portal;  
 So for ever will I leave  
 Such a taint, and soon unweave  
 All the magic of the place."

40

\* \* \* \* \*

So saying, with a Spirit's glance  
 He dived!

50

## SONNET

## WRITTEN UPON THE TOP OF BEN NEVIS

READ me a lesson, Muse, and speak it loud  
 Upon the top of Nevis, blind in mist!  
 I look into the chasms, and a shroud  
 Vapourous doth hide them,—just so much I wist  
 Mankind do know of hell; I look o'erhead,  
 And there is sullen mist,—even so much  
 Mankind can tell of heaven; mist is spread  
 Before the earth, beneath me,—even such,  
 Even so vague is man's sight of himself!  
 Here are the craggy stones beneath my feet,—  
 Thus much I know that, a poor witless elf,  
 I tread on them,—that all my eye doth meet  
 Is mist and crag, not only on this height,  
 But in the world of thought and mental might!

10

## BEN NEVIS

## A DIALOGUE

[PERSONS: MRS. CAMERON AND BEN NEVIS]

MRS. C.

UPON my life Sir Nevis I am pique'd  
 That I have so far panted tugg'd and reek'd  
 To do an hono[u]r to your old bald pate

And now am sitting on you just to bate,  
 Without your paying me one compliment.  
 Alas 'tis so with all, when our intent  
 Is plain, and in the eye of all Mankind  
 We fair ones show a preference, too blind!  
 You Gentle man immediately turn tail—  
 O let me then my hapless fate bewail! 10  
 Ungrateful Baldpate, have I not disdain'd  
 The pleasant Valleys—have I not, madbrain'd,  
 Deserted all my Pickles and preserves,  
 My China closet too—with wretched Nerves  
 To boot—say, wretched ingrate, have I not  
 Le[f]t my soft cushion chair and caudle pot?  
 'Tis true I had no corns—no! thank the fates,  
 My Shoemaker was always Mr. Bates.  
 And if not Mr. Bates why I'm not old!  
 Still dumb, ungrateful Nevis—still so cold! 20

Here the Lady took some more w[h]iskey and was putting even  
 more to her lips when she dashed [it] to the Ground for the  
 Mountain began to grumble—which continued for a few minutes  
 before he thus began,

BEN NEVIS

What whining bit of tongue and Mouth thus dares  
 Disturb my slumber of a thousand years?  
 Even so long my sleep has been secure—  
 And to be so awaked I'll not endure.  
 Oh pain—for since the Eagle's earliest scream  
 I've had a dam[n]'d confounded ugly dream,  
 A Nightmare sure. What, Madam, was it you?  
 It cannot be! My old eyes are not true!  
 Red-Crag, my Spectacles! Now let me see!  
 Good Heavens, Lady, how the gemini 30  
 Did you get here? O I shall split my sides!  
 I shall earthquake——

MRS. C.

Sweet Nevis, do not quake, for though I love  
 You[r] honest Countenance all things above,  
 Truly I should not like to be convey'd  
 So far into your Bosom—gentle Maid  
 Loves not too rough a treatment, gentle Sir—  
 Pray thee be calm and do not quake nor stir,  
 No not a Stone, or I shall go in fits—

## BEN NEVIS

I must—I shall—I meet not such tit bits— 40  
 I meet not such sweet creatures every day—  
 By my old night-cap, night-cap night and day,  
 I must have one sweet Buss—I must and shall!  
 Red-Crag!—What, Madam, can you then repent  
 Of all the toil and vigour you have spent  
 To see Ben Nevis and to touch his nose?  
 Red-Crag, I say! O I must have them close!  
 Red-Crag, there lies beneath my farthest toe  
 A vein of Sulphur—go dear Red-Crag, go—  
 And rub your flinty back against it—budge! 50  
 Dear Madam, I must kiss you, faith I must!  
 I must Embrace you with my dearest gust!  
 Block-head, d’ye hear—Block-head, I’ll make her feel—  
 There lies beneath my east leg’s northern heel  
 A cave of young earth dragons—well, my boy,  
 Go thither quick and so complete my joy;  
 Take you a bundle of the largest pines  
 And when the sun on fiercest Phosphor shines  
 Fire them and ram them in the Dragon’s nest,  
 Then will the dragons fry and fizz their best 60  
 Until ten thousand now no bigger than  
 Poor Al[li]igators—poor things of one span—  
 Will each one swell to twice ten times the size  
 Of northern whale—then for the tender prize—  
 The moment then—for then will Red-Crag rub  
 His flinty back—and I shall kiss and snub  
 And press my dainty morsel to my breast.  
 Block-head, make haste!  
 O Muses weep the rest—  
 The Lady fainted and he thought her dead  
 So pulled the clouds again about his head 70  
 And went to sleep again—soon she was rous’d  
 By her affrighted servants—next day hous’d  
 Safe on the lowly ground she bless’d her fate  
 That fainting fit was not delayed too late.

## TRANSLATION FROM A SONNET OF RONSARD

NATURE withheld Cassandra in the skies,  
 For more adornment, a full thousand years;  
 She took their cream of Beauty’s fairest dyes,  
 And shap’d and tinted her above all Peers:  
 Meanwhile Love kept her dearly with his wings,  
 And underneath their shadow fill’d her eyes

With such a richness that the cloudy Kings  
 Of high Olympus utter'd slavish sighs.  
 When from the Heavens I saw her first descend,  
 My heart took fire, and only burning pains, 10  
 They were my pleasures—they my Life's sad end;  
 Love pour'd her beauty into my warm veins . . .

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

# A PROPHECY: TO GEORGE KEATS IN AMERICA

'Tis the witching hour of night,  
 Orbed is the moon and bright,  
 And the stars they glisten, glisten,  
 Seeming with bright eyes to listen—  
 For what listen they?  
 For a song and for a charm,  
 See they glisten in alarm,  
 And the moon is waxing warm  
 To hear what I shall say. 10  
 Moon! keep wide thy golden ears—  
 Harken, stars! and hearken, spheres!—  
 Harken, thou eternal sky!  
 I sing an infant's lullaby,  
 A pretty lullaby.  
 Listen, listen, listen, listen,  
 Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,  
 And hear my lullaby!  
 Though the rushes that will make  
 Its cradle still are in the lake—  
 Though the linen that will be 20  
 Its swathe, is on the cotton tree—  
 Though the woollen that will keep  
 It warm, is on the silly sheep—  
 Listen, starlight, listen, listen,  
 Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,  
 And hear my lullaby!  
 Child, I see thee! Child, I've found thee  
 Midst of the quiet all around thee!  
 Child, I see thee! Child, I spy thee!  
 And thy mother sweet is nigh thee! 30  
 Child, I know thee! Child no more,  
 But a Poet evermore!  
 See, see, the lyre, the lyre,  
 In a flame of fire,  
 Upon the little cradle's top

## K E A T S

Flaring, flaring, flaring,  
 Past the eyesight's bearing.  
 Awake it from its sleep,  
 And see if it can keep  
 Its eyes upon the blaze— 40  
     Amaze, amaze!  
 It stares, it stares, it stares,  
 It dares what no one dares!  
 It lifts its little hand into the flame  
 Unharm'd, and on the strings  
 Paddles a little tune, and sings,  
 With dumb endeavour sweetly—  
 Bard art thou completely!  
     Little child  
     O' th' western wild, 50  
 Bard art thou completely!  
 Sweetly with dumb endeavour,  
 A Poet now or never,  
     Little child  
     O' th' western wild,  
 A Poet now or never!

## STANZAS

## I

IN a drear-nighted December,  
     Too happy, happy tree,  
 Thy branches ne'er remember  
     Their green felicity:  
     The north cannot undo them,  
     With a sleety whistle through them;  
     Nor frozen thawings glue them  
         From budding at the prime.

## II

IN a drear-nighted December,  
     Too happy, happy brook,  
 Thy bubblings ne'er remember  
     Apollo's summer look;  
     But with a sweet forgetting,  
     They stay their crystal fretting,  
     Never, never petting  
         About the frozen time.



III

Ah! would 'twere so with many  
 A gentle girl and boy!  
 But were there ever any  
 Writh'd not at passed joy?  
 To know the change and feel it,  
 When there is none to heal it,  
 Nor numbed sense to steel it,  
 Was never said in rhyme.

SPENSERIAN STANZA

[*Written at the close of Canto II, Book V, of  
 "The Faerie Queene"*]

IN after-time, a sage of mickle lore  
 Yclep'd Typographus, the Giant took,  
 And did refit his limbs as heretofore,  
 And made him read in many a learned book,  
 And into many a lively legend look;  
 Thereby in goodly themes so training him,  
 That all his brutishness he quite forsook,  
 When, meeting Artegall and Talus grim,  
 The one he struck stone-blind, the other's eyes wox dim.

THE EVE OF SAINT MARK

UPON a Sabbath-day it fell:  
 Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,  
 That call'd the folk to evening prayer;  
 The city streets were clean and fair  
 From wholesome drench of April rains;  
 And, on the western window panes,  
 The chilly sunset faintly told  
 Of unmat'ur'd green vallies cold,  
 Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,  
 Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,  
 Of primroses by shelter'd rills,  
 And daisies on the aguish hills.  
 Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell:  
 The silent streets were crowded well  
 With staid and pious companies,  
 Warm from their fire-side orat'ries;  
 And moving, with demurest air,  
 To even-song, and vesper prayer.  
 Each arched porch, and entry low,  
 Was fill'd with patient folk and slow,

10

20

With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,  
While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceas'd, the prayers begun,  
And Bertha had not yet half done  
A curious volume, patch'd and torn,  
That all day long, from earliest morn,  
Had taken captive her two eyes,  
Among its golden broideries;  
Perplex'd her with a thousand things,—  
The stars of Heaven, and angels' wings, 30  
Martyrs in a fiery blaze,  
Azure saints in silver rays,  
Moses' breastplate, and the seven  
Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,  
The winged Lion of Saint Mark,  
And the Covenantal Ark,  
With its many mysteries,  
Cherubim and golden mice.

Bertha was a maiden fair,  
Dwelling in the old Minster-square; 40  
From her fire-side she could see,  
Sidelong, its rich antiquity,  
Far as the Bishop's garden-wall;  
Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,  
Full-leav'd, the forest had outstript,  
By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,  
So shelter'd by the mighty pile.  
Bertha arose, and read awhile,  
With forehead 'gainst the window-pane. 50  
Again she try'd, and then again,  
Until the dusk eve left her dark  
Upon the legend of St. Mark.  
From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,  
She lifted up her soft warm chin,  
With aching neck and swimming eyes,  
And daz'd with saintly imageries.

All was gloom, and silent all,  
Save now and then the still foot-fall  
Of one returning homewards late,  
Past the echoing minster-gate. 60

The clamorous daws, that all the day  
Above tree-tops and towers play,  
Pair by pair had gone to rest,  
Each in its ancient belfry-nest,

Where asleep they fall betimes,  
To music of the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom,  
Abroad and in the homely room:  
Down she sat, poor cheated soul!  
And struck a lamp from the dismal coal; 70  
Lean'd forward, with bright drooping hair  
And slant book, full against the glare.  
Her shadow, in uneasy guise,  
Hover'd about, a giant size,  
On ceiling-beam and old oak chair,  
The parrot's cage, and panel square;  
And the warm angled winter screen,  
On which were many monsters seen,  
Call'd doves of Siam, Lima mice,  
And legless birds of Paradise, 80  
Macaw, and tender Avadavat,  
And silken-furr'd Angora cat.  
Untir'd she read, her shadow still  
Glower'd about, as it would fill  
The room with wildest forms and shades,  
As though some ghostly queen of spades  
Had come to mock behind her back,  
And dance, and ruffle her garments black.  
Untir'd she read the legend page,  
Of holy Mark, from youth to age, 90  
On land, on sea, in pagan chains,  
Rejoicing for his many pains.  
Sometimes the learned eremite,  
With golden star, or dagger bright,  
Referr'd to pious poesies  
Written in smallest crow-quill size  
Beneath the text; and thus the rhyme  
Was parcell'd out from time to time:  
——“Als writith he of swevenis,  
Men han beforen they wake in bliss, 100  
Whanne that hir friendes thinke hem bound  
In crimped shroude farre under grounde;  
And how a litling child mote be  
A saint er its nativitie,  
Gif that the modre (God her blesse!)  
Kepen in solitarinesse,  
And kissen devoute the holy croce.  
Of Goddess love, and Sathan's force,—  
He writith; and thinges many mo:  
Of swiche thinges I may not show. 110

Bot I must tellen verilie  
 Somdel of Saintè Cicilie,  
 And chieflie what he auctorethe  
 Of Saintè Markis life and dethe:"

At length her constant eyelids come  
 Upon the fervent martyrdom;  
 Then lastly to his holy shrine,  
 Exalt amid the tapers' shine  
 At Venice,—

## ODE TO FANNY

### I

PHYSICIAN Nature! let my spirit blood!  
 O ease my heart of verse and let me rest;  
 Throw me upon thy Tripod, till the flood  
 Of stifling numbers ebbs from my full breast.  
 A theme! a theme! great nature! give a theme;  
 Let me begin my dream.  
 I come—I see thee, as thou standest there,  
 Beckon me not into the wintry air.

### II

Ah! dearest love, sweet home of all my fears,  
 And hopes, and joys, and panting miseries,—  
 To-night, if I may guess, thy beauty wears  
 A smile of such delight,  
 As brilliant and as bright,  
 As when with ravished, aching, vassal eyes,  
 Lost in soft amaze,  
 I gaze, I gaze!

### III

Who now, with greedy looks, eats up my feast?  
 What stare outfaces now my silver moon!  
 Ah! keep that hand unravished at the least;  
 Let, let, the amorous burn—  
 But, pr'ythee, do not turn  
 The current of your heart from me so soon.  
 O! save, in charity,  
 The quickest pulse for me.

IV

Save it for me, sweet love! though music breathe  
 Voluptuous visions into the warm air;  
 Though swimming through the dance's dangerous  
     wreath,  
     Be like an April day,  
     Smiling and cold and gay,  
 A temperate lilly, temperate as fair;  
     Then, Heaven! there will be  
     A warmer June for me.

V

Why, this—you'll say, my Fanny! is not true:  
 Put your soft hand upon your snowy side,  
 Where the heart beats: confess—'tis nothing new—  
     Must not a woman be  
     A feather on the sea,  
 Sway'd to and fro by every wind and tide?  
     Of as uncertain speed  
     As blow-ball from the mead?

VI

I know it—and to know it is despair  
 To one who loves you as I love, sweet Fanny!  
 Whose heart goes fluttering for you every where,  
     Nor, when away you roam,  
     Dare keep its wretched home,  
 Love, love alone, his pains severe and many.  
     Then, loveliest! keep me free,  
     From torturing jealousy.

VII

Ah! if you prize my subdued soul above  
 The poor, the fading, brief, pride of an hour;  
 Let none profane my Holy See of love,  
     Or with a rude hand break  
     The sacramental cake:  
 Let none else touch the just new-budded flower;  
     If not—may my eyes close,  
     Love! on their lost repose.

## SONNET

## TO SLEEP

O SOFT embalmer of the still midnight,  
 Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,  
 Our gloom-pleas'd eyes, embower'd from the light,  
 Enshaded in forgetfulness divine:  
 O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close  
 In midst of this thine hymn my willing eyes,  
 Or wait the "Amen," ere thy poppy throws  
 Around my bed its lulling charities.  
 Then save me, or the passed day will shine  
 Upon my pillow, breeding many woes,—  
 Save me from curious Conscience, that still lords  
 Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;  
 Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,  
 And seal the hushed Casket of my Soul.

10

## SONG

## I

HUSH, hush! tread softly! hush, hush my dear!  
 All the house is asleep, but we know very well  
 That the jealous, the jealous old bald-pate may hear,  
 Tho' you've padded his night-cap—O sweet Isabel!  
 Tho' your feet are more light than a Fairy's feet,  
 Who dances on bubbles where brooklets meet,—  
 Hush, hush! soft tiptoe! hush, hush my dear!  
 For less than a nothing the jealous can hear.

## II

No leaf doth tremble, no ripple is there  
 On the river,—all's still, and the night's sleepy eye  
 Closes up, and forgets all its Lethean care,  
 Charm'd to death by the drone of the humming Mayfly;  
 And the Moon, whether prudish or complaisant,  
 Has fled to her bower, well knowing I want  
 No light in the dusk, no torch in the gloom,  
 But my Isabel's eyes, and her lips pulp'd with bloom.

## III

Lift the latch! ah gently! ah tenderly—sweet!  
 We are dead if that latchet gives one little clink!  
 Well done—now those lips, and a flowery seat—  
 The old man may sleep, and the planets may wink;

The shut rose shall dream of our loves, and awake  
 Full blown, and such warmth for the morning's take,  
 The stock-dove shall hatch her soft brace and shall coo,  
 While I kiss to the melody, aching all through!

### SONG

I HAD a dove and the sweet dove died;  
 And I have thought it died of grieving:  
 O, what could it grieve for? Its feet were tied,  
 With a silken thread of my own hand's weaving;  
 Sweet little red feet! why should you die—  
 Why should you leave me, sweet bird! why?  
 You liv'd alone in the forest-tree,  
 Why, pretty thing! would you not live with me?  
 I kiss'd you oft and gave you white peas;  
 Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees?

10

### ODE ON INDOLENCE

"They toil not, neither do they spin."

#### I

ONE morn before me were three figures seen,  
 With bowed necks, and joined hands, side-faced;  
 And one behind the other stepp'd serene,  
 In placid sandals, and in white robes graced;  
 They pass'd, like figures on a marble urn,  
 When shifted round to see the other side;  
 They came again; as when the urn once more  
 Is shifted round, the first seen shades return;  
 And they were strange to me, as may betide  
 With vases, to one deep in Phidian lore.

#### II

How is it, Shadows! that I knew ye not?  
 How came ye muffled in so hush a mask?  
 Was it a silent deep-disguised plot  
 To steal away, and leave without a task  
 My idle days? Ripe was the drowsy hour;  
 The blissful cloud of summer-indolence  
 Benumb'd my eyes; my pulse grew less and less;  
 Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower:  
 O, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense  
 Unhaunted quite of all but—nothingness?

## III

A third time pass'd they by, and, passing, turn'd  
 Each one the face a moment whiles to me;  
 Then faded, and to follow them I burn'd  
 And ach'd for wings because I knew the three;  
 The first was a fair Maid, and Love her name;  
 The second was Ambition, pale of cheek,  
 And ever watchful with fatigued eye;  
 The last, whom I love more, the more of blame  
 Is heap'd upon her, maiden most unmeek,—  
 I knew to be my demon Poesy.

## IV

They faded, and, forsooth! I wanted wings:  
 O folly! What is love! and where is it?  
 And for that poor Ambition! it springs  
 From a man's little heart's short fever-fit;  
 For Poesy!—no,—she has not a joy,—  
 At least for me,—so sweet as drowsy noons,  
 And evenings steep'd in honied indolence;  
 O, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,  
 That I may never know how change the moons,  
 Or hear the voice of busy common-sense!

## V

And once more came they by;—alas! wherefore?  
 My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams;  
 My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o'er  
 With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams:  
 The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,  
 Tho' in her lids hung the sweet tears of May;  
 The open casement press'd a new-leav'd vine,  
 Let in the budding warmth and throstle's lay;  
 O Shadows! 'twas a time to bid farewell!  
 Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine.

## VI

So, ye three Ghosts, adieu! Ye cannot raise  
 My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass;  
 For I would not be dieted with praise,  
 A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!  
 Fade softly from my eyes, and be once more  
 In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn;  
 Farewell! I yet have visions for the night,  
 And for the day faint visions there is store;  
 Vanish, ye Phantoms! from my idle spright,  
 Into the clouds, and never more return!



SONNET

WHY did I laugh to-night? No voice will tell:  
 No God, no Demon of severe response,  
 Deigns to reply from heaven or from Hell.  
 Then to my human heart I turn at once.  
 Heart! Thou and I are here sad and alone;  
 I say, why did I laugh! O mortal pain!  
 O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I moan,  
 To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain.  
 Why did I laugh? I know this Being's lease,  
 My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads; 10  
 Yet would I on this very midnight cease,  
 And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds;  
 Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed,  
 But Death intenser—Death is Life's high meed.

SONNET

A DREAM, AFTER READING DANTE'S EPISODE OF PAULO AND FRANCESCA

As Hermes once took to his feathers light,  
 When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept,  
 So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright  
 So play'd, so charm'd, so conquer'd, so bereft  
 The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes;  
 And, seeing it asleep, so flew away—  
 Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,  
 Nor unto Tempe where Jove griev'd a day;  
 But to that second circle of sad hell,  
 Where 'mid the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw  
 Of rain and hail-stones, lovers need not tell 11  
 Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw,  
 Pale were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the form  
 I floated with, about that melancholy storm.

AN EXTEMPORE

FROM A LETTER TO GEORGE KEATS AND HIS WIFE

WHEN they were come into the Faery's Court  
 They rang—no one at home—all gone to sport  
 And dance and kiss and love as faeries do  
 For Fa[e]ries be as humans, lovers true—  
 Amid the woods they were, so lone and wild,  
 Where even the Robin feels himself exil'd  
 And where the very brooks as if afraid  
 Hurry along to some less magic shade.

"No one at home!" the fretful princess cried  
 "And all for nothing such a dre[a]ry ride, 10  
 And all for nothing my new diamond cross,  
 No one to see my Persian feathers toss,  
 No one to see my Ape, my Dwarf, my Fool,  
 Or how I pace my Otaheitan mule.  
 Ape, Dwarf and Fool, why stand you gaping there?  
 Burst the door open, quick—or I declare  
 I'll switch you soundly and in pieces tear."  
 The Dwarf began to tremble and the Ape  
 Star'd at the Fool, the Fool was all agape,  
 The Princess grasp'd her switch, but just in time 20  
 The dwarf with piteous face began to rhyme.  
 "O mighty Princess did you ne'er hear tell  
 What your poor servants know but too too well?  
 Know you the three great crimes in faery land?  
 The first, alas! poor Dwarf, I understand—  
 I made a whipstock of a faery's wand—  
 The next is snoring in their company—  
 The next, the last, the direst of the three  
 Is making free when they are not at home.  
 I was a Prince—a baby prince—my doom 30  
 You see, I made a whipstock of a wand—  
 My top has henceforth slept in faery land.  
 He was a Prince, the Fool, a grown up Prince,  
 But he has never been a King's son since  
 He fell a-snoring at a faery Ball—  
 Your poor Ape was a prince and he, poor thing,  
 Picklock'd a faery's boudour—now no king,  
 But ape—so pray your highness stay awhile;  
 'Tis sooth indeed, we know it to our sorrow—  
 Persist and *you* may be an ape tomorrow— 40  
 While the Dwarf spake the Princess all for spite  
 Peal'd [*sic*] the brown hazel twig to lilly white,  
 Clench'd her small teeth, and held her lips apart,  
 Try'd to look unconcern'd with beating heart.  
 They saw her highness had made up her mind  
 And quaver'd like the reeds before the wind,  
 And they had had it, but, O happy chance!  
 The Ape for very fear began to dance  
 And grin'd as all his ugliness did ache—  
 She staid her vixen fingers for his sake, 50  
 He was so very ugly: then she took  
 Her pocket glass mirror and began to look  
 First at herself and [then] at him and then  
 She smil'd at her own beauteous face again.

Yet for all this—for all her pretty face  
 She took it in her head to see the place.  
 Women gain little from experience  
 Either in Lovers, husbands or expense.  
 The more the beauty, the more fortune too,  
 Beauty before the wide world never knew. 60  
 So each fair reasons—tho' it oft miscarries.  
 She thought *her* pretty face would please the fa[e]ries.  
 "My darling Ape I won't whip you today—  
 Give me the Picklock, sirrah, and go play."  
 They all three wept—but counsel was as vain  
 As crying cup biddy to drops of rain.  
 Yet lingeringly did the sad Ape forth draw  
 The Picklock from the Pocket in his Jaw.  
 The Princess took it and dismounting straight  
 Trip'd in blue silver'd slippers to the gate 70  
 And touch'd the wards, the Door full cou[r]teou[s]ly  
 Opened—she enter'd with her servants three.  
 Again it clos'd and there was nothing seen  
 But the Mule grazing on the herbage green.

End of Canto xii

Canto the xiii

The Mule no sooner saw himself alone  
 Than he prick'd up his Ears—and said "well done!  
 At least, unhappy Prince, I may be free—  
 No more a Princess shall side-saddle me.  
 O King of Otaheité—tho' a Mule  
 'Aye every inch a King'—tho' 'Fortune's fool'— 80  
 Well done—for by what Mr. Dwarty said  
 I would not give a sixpence for her head."  
 Even as he spake he trotted in high glee  
 To the knotty side of an old Pollard tree  
 And rub|'d] his sides against the mossed bark  
 Till his Girths burst and left him naked stark  
 Except his Bridle—how get rid of that,  
 Buckled and tied with many a twist and plait?  
 At last it struck him to pretend to sleep  
 And then the thievish Monkeys down would creep 90  
 And filch the unpleasant trammels quite away.  
 No sooner thought of than adown he lay,  
 Sham'd a good snore—the Monkey-men descended  
 And whom they thought to injure they befriended.  
 They hung his Bridle on a topmost bough  
 And of[f] he went, run, trot, or anyhow —  
 Brown is gone to bed—and I am tired of rhyming . . .

SPENSERIAN STANZAS  
ON CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN

## I

HE is to weet a melancholy carle:  
Thin in the waist, with bushy head of hair,  
As hath the seeded thistle when in parle  
It holds the Zephyr, ere it sendeth fair  
Its light balloons into the summer air;  
Thereto his beard had not begun to bloom,  
No brush had touch'd his chin or razor sheer;  
No care had touch'd his cheek with mortal doom,  
But new he was and bright as scarf from Persian loom.

## II

Ne cared he for wine, or half-and-half  
Ne cared he for fish or flesh or fowl,  
And sauces held he worthless as the chaff;  
He 'sdeigned the swine-head at the wassail-bowl;  
Ne with lewd ribbalds sat he cheek by jowl;  
Ne with sly Lemans in the scorner's chair;  
But after water-brooks this Pilgrim's soul  
Panted, and all his food was woodland air  
Though he would oft-times feast on gilliflowers rare.

## III

The slang of cities in no wise he knew,  
*Tipping the wink* to him was heathen Greek;  
He sipp'd no olden Tom or ruin blue,  
Or nantz or cherry-brandy drank full meek  
By many a damsel hoarse and rouge of cheek;  
Nor did he know each aged watchman's beat,  
Nor in obscured purlieus would he seek  
For curled Jewesses, with ankles neat,  
Who as they walk abroad make tinkling with their feet.

## TWO OR THREE

## FROM A LETTER TO HIS SISTER

Two or three Posies  
With two or three simples—  
Two or three Noses  
With two or three pimples—  
Two or three wise men

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| And two or three ninny's— |         |
| Two or three purses       |         |
| And two or three guineas— |         |
| Two or three raps         |         |
| At two or three doors—    | 10      |
| Two or three naps         |         |
| Of two or three hours—    |         |
| Two or three Cats         |         |
| And two or three mice—    |         |
| Two or three sprats       |         |
| At a very great price—    |         |
| Two or three sandies      |         |
| And two or three tabbies— |         |
| Two or three dandies      |         |
| And two Mrs. [Abbeys]     | mum! 20 |
| Two or three Smiles       |         |
| And two or three frowns—  |         |
| Two or three Miles        |         |
| To two or three towns—    |         |
| Two or three pegs         |         |
| For two or three bonnets— |         |
| Two or three dove eggs    |         |
| To hatch into sonnets.    |         |

## LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

### I

AH, what can ail thee, wretched wight,  
 Alone and palely loitering;  
 The sedge is wither'd from the lake,  
 And no birds sing.

### II

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,  
 So haggard and so woe-begone?  
 The squirrel's granary is full,  
 And the harvest's done.

### III

I see a lilly on thy brow,  
 With anguish moist and fever dew;  
 And on thy cheek a fading rose  
 Fast withereth too.

## IV

I met a lady in the meads  
Full beautiful, a faery's child;  
Her hair was long, her foot was light,  
And her eyes were wild.

## V

I set her on my pacing steed,  
And nothing else saw all day long;  
For sideways would she lean, and sing  
A faery's song.

## VI

I made a garland for her head,  
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;  
She look'd at me as she did love,  
And made sweet moan.

## VII

She found me roots of relish sweet,  
And honey wild, and manna dew;  
And sure in language strange she said,  
I love thee true.

## VIII

She took me to her elfin grot,  
And there she gaz'd and sighed deep,  
And there I shut her wild sad eyes—  
So kiss'd to sleep.

## IX

And there we slumber'd on the moss,  
And there I dream'd, ah woe betide,  
The latest dream I ever dream'd  
On the cold hill side.

## X

I saw pale kings, and princes too,  
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;  
Who cry'd—"La belle Dame sans merci  
Hath thee in thrall!"

XI

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloam  
 With horrid warning gaped wide,  
 And I awoke, and found me here  
 On the cold hill side.

XII

And this is why I sojourn here  
 Alone and palely loitering,  
 Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,  
 And no birds sing.

SONG OF FOUR FAERIES,

FIRE, AIR, EARTH, AND WATER,

SALAMANDER, ZEPHYR, DUSKETHA, AND BREAMA

SALAMANDER

HAPPY, happy glowing fire!

ZEPHYR

Fragrant air! delicious light!

DUSKETHA

Let me to my glooms retire!

BREAMA

I to green-weed rivers bright!

SALAMANDER

Happy, happy glowing fire!  
 Dazzling bowers of soft retire,  
 Ever let my nourish'd wing,  
 Like a bat's, still wandering,  
 Faintless fan your fiery spaces,  
 Spirit sole in deadly places.  
 In unhaunted roar and blaze,  
 Open eyes that never daze,  
 Let me see the myriad shapes  
 Of men, and beasts, and fish, and apes,  
 Portray'd in many a fiery den,  
 And wrought by spumy bitumen.

## K E A T S

On the deep intenser roof,  
 Arched every way aloof,  
 Let me breathe upon their skies,  
 And anger their live tapestries;  
 Free from cold, and every care,  
 Of chilly rain, and shivering air.

20

## ZEPHYR

Spirit of Fire! away! away!  
 Or your very roundelay  
 Will sear my plumage newly budded  
 From its quilled sheath, all studded  
 With the self-same dews that fell  
 On the May-grown Asphodel.  
 Spirit of Fire—away! away!

## BREAMA

Spirit of Fire—away! away!  
 Zephyr, blue-eyed Faery, turn,  
 And see my cool sedge-bury'd urn,  
 Where it rests its mossy brim  
 'Mid water-mint and cresses dim;  
 And the flowers, in sweet troubles,  
 Lift their eyes above the bubbles,  
 Like our Queen, when she would please  
 To sleep, and Oberon *will* tease.  
 Love me, blue-eyed Faery, true!  
 Soothly I am sick for you.

30

40

## ZEPHYR

Gentle Breama! by the first  
 Violet young nature nurst,  
 I will bathe myself with thee,  
 So you sometimes follow me  
 To my home, far, far, in west,  
 Beyond the nimble-wheeled quest  
 Of the golden-browed sun:  
 Come with me, o'er tops of trees,  
 To my fragrant palaces,  
 Where they ever floating are  
 Beneath the cherish of a star  
 Call'd Vesper, who with silver veil  
 Ever hides his brilliance pale,  
 Ever gently-drows'd doth keep  
 Twilight for the Fayses to sleep.

50



Fear not that your watery hair  
Will thirst in drouthy ringlets there;  
Clouds of stored summer rains  
Thou shalt taste, before the stains  
Of the mountain soil they take, 60  
And too unlucent for thee make.  
I love thee, crystal Faery, true!  
Sooth I am as sick for you!

SALAMANDER

Out, ye aguish Faeries, out!  
Chilly lovers, what a rout  
Keep ye with your frozen breath,  
Colder than the mortal death.  
Adder-eyed Dusketha, speak,  
Shall we leave these, and go seek  
In the earth's wide entrails old 70  
Couches warm as their's are cold?  
O for a fiery gloom and thee,  
Dusketha, so enchantingly  
Freckle-wing'd and lizard-sided!

DUSKETHA

By thee, Sprite, will I be guided!  
I care not for cold or heat;  
Frost and flame, or sparks, or sleet,  
To my essence are the same;—  
But I honour more the flame.  
Sprite of Fire, I follow thee 80  
Wheresoever it may be,  
To the torrid spouts and fountains,  
Underneath earth-quaked mountains;  
Or, at thy supreme desire,  
Touch the very pulse of fire  
With my bare unlidded eyes.

SALAMANDER

Sweet Dusketha! paradise!  
Off, ye icy Spirits, fly!  
Frosty creatures of the sky!

DUSKETHA

Breathe upon them, fiery sprite! 90

ZEPHYR AND BREAMA

Away! away to our delight!

## K E A T S

## SALAMANDER

Go, feed on icicles, while we  
Bedded in tongue-flames will be.

## DUSKETHA

Lead me to those feverous glooms,  
Sprite of Fire!

## BREAMA

Me to the blooms,  
Blue-eyed Zephyr, of those flowers  
Far in the west where the May-cloud lowers;  
And the beams of still Vesper, when winds are all wist,  
Are shed thro' the rain and the milder mist,  
And twilight your floating bowers. 100

## TWO SONNETS ON FAME

## I

FAME, like a wayward Girl, will still be coy  
To those who woo her with too slavish knees,  
But makes surrender to some thoughtless Boy,  
And dotes the more upon a heart at ease;  
She is a Gipsej, will not speak to those  
Who have not learnt to be content without her;  
A Jilt, whose ear was never whisper'd close,  
Who thinks they scandal her who talk about her;  
A very Gipsej is she, Nilus-born,  
Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar; 10  
Ye love-sick Bards, repay her scorn for scorn,  
Ye Artists lovelorn, madmen that ye are!  
Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,  
Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

## II

"You cannot eat your cake and have it too."—*Proverb.*

How fever'd is the man, who cannot look  
Upon his mortal days with temperate blood,  
Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,  
And robs his fair name of its maidenhood;  
It is as if the rose should pluck herself,  
Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom,  
As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,  
Should darken her pure grot with muddy gloom,

But the rose leaves herself upon the briar,  
 For winds to kiss and grateful bees to feed, 10  
 And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire,  
 The undisturbed lake has crystal space,  
 Why then should man, teasing the world for grace,  
 Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed?

# SONNET

## ON THE SONNET

If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd,  
 And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet  
 Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness,  
 Let us find, if we must be constrain'd,  
 Sandals more interwoven and complete  
 To fit the naked foot of Poesy:  
 Let us inspect the Lyre, and weigh the stress  
 Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd  
 By ear industrious, and attention meet; 10  
 Misers of sound and syllable, no less  
 Than Midas of his coinage, let us be  
 Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath crown;  
 So, if we may not let the Muse be free,  
 She will be bound with garlands of her own.

# APOLLO AND THE GRACES

WRITTEN TO THE TUNE OF THE AIR IN "DON GIOVANNI"

## APOLLO

WHICH of the fairest three  
 To-day will ride with me?  
 My steeds are all pawing at the threshold of the morn:  
 Which of the fairest three  
 To-day will ride with me  
 Across the gold Autumn's whole Kingdom of corn?

## THE GRACES *all answer*

I will, I— I— I—  
 O young Apollo let me fly  
 Along with thee,  
 I will—I, I, I, 10  
 The many wonders see  
 I— I— I— I—  
 And thy lyre shall never have a slackened string:  
 I, I, I, I,  
 Thro' the golden day will sing.

## YOU SAY YOU LOVE

## I

You say you love; but with a voice  
Chaster than a nun's, who singeth  
The soft Vespers to herself  
While the chime-bell ringeth—  
O love me truly!

## II

You say you love; but with a smile  
Cold as sunrise in September,  
As you were Saint Cupid's nun,  
And kept his weeks of Ember.  
O love me truly!

## III

You say you love—but then your lips  
Coral tinted teach no blisses,  
More than coral in the sea—  
They never pout for kisses—  
O love me truly!

## IV

You say you love; but then your hand  
No soft squeeze for squeeze returneth,  
It is like a statue's dead—  
While mine to passion burneth—  
O love me truly!

## V

O breathe a word or two of fire!  
Smile, as if those words should burn me,  
Squeeze as lovers should—O kiss  
And in thy heart inurn me!  
O love me truly!

OTHO THE GREAT

A TRAGEDY

IN FIVE ACTS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

OTHO THE GREAT, *Emperor of Germany.*

LUDOLPH, *his Son.*

CONRAD, *Duke of Franconia.*

ALBERT, *a Knight, favoured by Otho.*

SIGIFRED, *an Officer, friend of Ludolph.*

THEODORE, } *Officers.*  
GONFRED, }

ETHELBERT. *an Abbot.*

GERSA, *Prince of Hungary.*

*An Hungarian Captain.*

*Physician.*

*Page.*

*Nobles, Knights, Attendants, and Soldiers.*

ERMINIA, *Niece of Otho.*

AURANTHE, *Conrad's Sister.*

*Ladies and Attendants.*

SCENE. *The Castle of Friedburg, its vicinity, and the Hungarian Camp.*

TIME. *One Day.*

# OTHO THE GREAT

## ACT I

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Castle. Enter CONRAD.*

*Conrad.* So, I am safe emerged from these broils!  
Amid the wreck of thousands I am whole;  
For every crime I have a laurel-wreath,  
For every lie a lordship. Nor yet has  
My ship of fortune furl'd her silken sails,—  
Let her glide on! This danger'd neck is saved,  
By dexterous policy, from the rebel's axe;  
And of my ducal palace not one stone  
Is bruised by the Hungarian petards.  
Toil hard, ye slaves, and from the miser-earth  
Bring forth once more my bullion, treasured deep,  
With all my jewell'd salvers, silver and gold,  
And precious goblets that make rich the wine.  
But why do I stand babbling to myself?  
Where is Auranthe? I have news for her  
Shall—

10

*Enter AURANTHE.*

*Auranthe.* Conrad! what tidings? Good, if I may guess  
From your alert eyes and high-lifted brows.  
What tidings of the battle? Albert? Ludolph? Otho?

*Conrad.* You guess aright. And, sister, slurring o'er  
Our by-gone quarrels, I confess my heart  
Is beating with a child's anxiety,  
To make our golden fortune known to you.

20

*Auranthe.* So serious?

*Conrad.* Yes, so serious, that before  
I utter even the shadow of a hint  
Concerning what will make that sin-worn cheek  
Blush joyous blood through every lineament,  
You must make here a solemn vow to me.

*Auranthe.* I prythee, Conrad, do not overact  
The hypocrite—what vow would you impose?

*Conrad.* Trust me for once,—that you may be assur'd  
'Tis not confiding to a broken reed,  
A poor Court-bankrupt, outwitted and lost,  
Revolve these facts in your acutest mood,

31

In such a mood as now you listen to me:—  
 A few days since, I was an open rebel  
 Against the Emperor, had suborn'd his son,  
 Drawn off his nobles to revolt, and shown  
 Contented fools causes for discontent  
 Fresh hatch'd in my ambition's eagle nest—  
 So thriv'd I as a rebel, and behold  
 Now I am Otho's favourite, his dear friend,  
 His right hand, his brave Conrad.

40

*Auranthe.* I confess  
 You have intrigued with these unsteady times  
 To admiration; but to be a favourite—

*Conrad.* I saw my moment. The Hungarians,  
 Collected silently in holes and corners,  
 Appear'd, a sudden host, in the open day.  
 I should have perish'd in our empire's wreck,  
 But, calling interest loyalty, swore faith  
 To most believing Otho; and so help'd  
 His blood-stain'd ensigns to the victory  
 In yesterday's hard fight, that it has turn'd  
 The edge of his sharp wrath to eager kindness.

50

*Auranthe.* So far yourself. But what is this to me  
 More than that I am glad? I gratulate you.

*Conrad.* Yes, sister, but it does regard you greatly,  
 Nearly, momentously,—aye, painfully!  
 Make me this vow—

*Auranthe.* Concerning whom or what?

*Conrad.* Albert!

*Auranthe.* I would inquire somewhat of him:  
 You had a letter from me touching him?  
 No treason 'gainst his head in deed or word!  
 Surely you spar'd him at my earnest prayer?  
 Give me the letter—it should not exist!

60

*Conrad.* At one pernicious charge of the enemy,  
 I, for a moment-whiles, was prisoner ta'en  
 And rifled,—stuff! the horses' hoofs have minc'd it!

*Auranthe.* He is alive?

*Conrad.* He is! but here make oath  
 To alienate him from your scheming brain,  
 Divorce him from your solitary thoughts,  
 And cloud him in such utter banishment,  
 That when his person meets again your eye,  
 Your vision shall quite lose its memory,  
 And wander past him as through vacancy.

70

*Auranthe.* I'll not be perjured.

*Conrad.* No, nor great, nor mighty;  
 You would not wear a crown, or rule a kingdom.



To you it is indifferent.

*Auranthe.* What means this?

*Conrad.* You'll not be perjured! Go to Albert then,  
That camp-mushroom—dishonour of our house.  
Go, page his dusty heels upon a march,  
Furbish his jingling baldric while he sleeps, 80  
And share his mouldy ration in a siege.  
Yet stay,—perhaps a charm may call you back,  
And make the widening circlets of your eyes  
Sparkle with healthy fevers.—The Emperor  
Hath given consent that you should marry Ludolph!

*Auranthe.* Can it be, brother? For a golden crown  
With a queen's awful lips I doubly thank you!

This is to wake in Paradise! Farewell

Thou clod of yesterday—'twas not myself!

Not till this moment did I ever feel 90

My spirit's faculties! I'll flatter you

For this, and be you ever proud of it;

Thou, Jove-like, struck'st thy forehead,

And from the teeming marrow of thy brain

I spring complete Minerva! But the prince—

His highness Ludolph—where is he?

*Conrad.*

I know not:

When, lackeying my counsel at a beck,

The rebel lords, on bended knees, received

The Emperor's pardon, Ludolph kept aloof,

Sole, in a stiff, fool-hardy, sulky pride; 100

Yet, for all this, I never saw a father

In such a sickly longing for his son.

We shall soon see him, for the Emperor

He will be here this morning.

*Auranthe.*

That I heard

Among the midnight rumours from the camp.

*Conrad.* You give up Albert to me?

*Auranthe.*

Harm him not!

E'en for his highness Ludolph's sceptry hand,

I would not Albert suffer any wrong.

*Conrad.* Have I not laboured, plotted—?

*Auranthe.*

See you spare him:

Nor be pathetic, my kind benefactor, 110

On all the many bounties of your hand,—

'Twas for yourself you laboured—not for me!

Do you not count, when I am queen, to take

Advantage of your chance discoveries

Of my poor secrets, and so hold a rod

Over my life?

*Conrad.* Let not this slave—this villain—  
 Be cause of feud between us. See! he comes!  
 Look, woman, look, your Albert is quite safe!  
 In haste it seems. Now shall I be in the way,  
 And wish'd with silent curses in my grave,  
 Or side by side with 'whelmed mariners.

120

*Enter ALBERT.*

*Albert.* Fair on your graces fall this early morrow!  
 So it is like to do, without my prayers,  
 For your right noble names, like favourite tunes,  
 Have fall'n full frequent from our Emperor's lips,  
 High commented with smiles.

*Auranthe.* Noble Albert!

*Conrad (aside).* Noble!

*Auranthe.* Such salutation argues a glad heart  
 In our prosperity. We thank you, sir.

*Albert.* Lady! O, would to Heaven your poor servant  
 Could do you better service than mere words!

130

But I have other greeting than mine own,  
 From no less man than Otho, who has sent  
 This ring as pledge of dearest amity;  
 'Tis chosen I hear from Hymen's jewel'ry,  
 And you will prize it, lady, I doubt not,  
 Beyond all pleasures past, and all to come.  
 To you great duke—

*Conrad.* To me! What of me, ha?

*Albert.* What pleas'd your grace to say?

*Conrad.* Your message, sir!

*Albert.* You mean not this to me?

*Conrad.* Sister, this way;

For there shall be no "gentle Alberts" now,  
 No "sweet Auranthes!"

[*Aside.*  
 141

[*Excunt CONRAD and AURANTHE.*

*Albert (solus).* The duke is out of temper; if he knows  
 More than a brother of a sister ought,  
 I should not quarrel with his peevishness.  
 Auranthe—Heaven preserve her always fair!—  
 Is in the heady, proud, ambitious vein;  
 I bicker not with her,—bid her farewell!  
 She has taken flight from me, then let her soar, —  
 He is a fool who stands at pining gaze!  
 But for poor Ludolph, he is food for sorrow:  
 No levelling bluster of my licens'd thoughts,  
 No military swagger of my mind,  
 Can smother from myself the wrong I've done him,—

150

Without design, indeed,—yet it is so,—  
And opiate for the conscience have I none!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*The Court-yard of the Castle.*

*Martial Music. Enter, from the outer gate, OTHO, Nobles, Knights, and Attendants. The Soldiers halt at the gate, with Banners in sight.*

*Otho.* Where is my noble herald?

*Enter CONRAD, from the Castle, attended by two Knights and Servants. ALBERT following.*

Well, hast told

Auranthe our intent imperial?  
Lest our rent banners, too o' the sudden shown,  
Should fright her silken casements, and dismay  
Her household to our lack of entertainment.  
A victory!

*Conrad.* God save illustrious Otho!

*Otho.* Aye, Conrad, it will pluck out all grey hairs;  
It is the best physician for the spleen;  
The courtliest inviter to a feast;  
The subtlest excuser of small faults;  
And a nice judge in the age and smack of wine.

10

*Enter, from the Castle, AURANTHE, followed by Pages holding up her robes, and a train of Women. She kneels.*

Hail my sweet hostess! I do thank the stars,  
Or my good soldiers, or their ladies' eyes,  
That, after such a merry battle fought,  
I can, all safe in body and in soul,  
Kiss your fair hand and lady fortune's too.  
My ring! now, on my life, it doth rejoice  
These lips to feel 't on this soft ivory!

Keep it, my brightest daughter; it may prove  
The little prologue to a line of kings.

20

I strove against thee and my hot-blood son,  
Dull blockhead that I was to be so blind,  
But now my sight is clear; forgive me, lady.

*Auranthe.* My lord, I was a vassal to your frown,  
And now your favour makes me but more humble;  
In wintry winds the simple snow is safe,  
But fadeth at the greeting of the sun:  
Unto thine anger I might well have spoken,  
Taking on me a woman's privilege,  
But this so sudden kindness makes me dumb.

30

*Otho.* What need of this? Enough, if you will be  
A potent tutoress to my wayward boy,  
And teach him, what it seems his nurse could not.

To say, for once, I thank you. Sigifred!

*Albert.* He has not yet return'd, my gracious liege.

*Otho.* What then! No tidings of my friendly Arab?

*Conrad.* None, mighty Otho.

[*To one of his Knights, who goes out.*

Send forth instantly

An hundred horsemen from my honoured gates,

To scour the plains and search the cottages.

Cry a reward, to him who shall first bring

40

News of that vanished Arabian,

A full-heap'd helmet of the purest gold.

*Otho.* More thanks, good Conrad; for, except my son's,

There is no face I rather would behold

Than that same quick-eyed pagan's. By the saints,

This coming night of banquets must not light

Her dazzling torches; nor the music breathe

Smooth, without clashing cymbal, tones of peace

And in-door melodies; nor the ruddy wine

Ebb spouting to the lees; if I pledge not,

50

In my first cup, that Arab!

*Albert.* Mighty Monarch,

I wonder not this stranger's victor-deeds

So hang upon your spirit. Twice in the fight

It was my chance to meet his olive brow,

Triumphant in the enemy's shatter'd rhomb;

And, to say truth, in any Christian arm

I never saw such prowess.

*Otho.* Did you ever?

O, 'tis a noble boy!—tut!—what do I say?

I mean a triple Saladin, whose eyes,

When in the glorious scuffle they met mine,

60

Seem'd to say—"Sleep, old man, in safety sleep;

I am the victory!"

*Conrad.* Pity he's not here.

*Otho.* And my son too, pity he is not here.

Lady Auranthe, I would not make you blush,

Put can you give a guess where Ludolph is?

Know you not of him?

*Auranthe.* Indeed, my liege, no secret—

*Otho.* Nay, nay, without more words, dost know of him?

*Auranthe.* I would I were so over-fortunate,

Both for his sake and mine, and to make glad

A father's ears with tidings of his son.

70

*Otho.* I see 'tis like to be a tedious day.

Were Theodore and Gonfred and the rest

Sent forth with my commands?

*Albert.* Aye, my lord.

*Otho.* And no news! No news! 'Faith! 'tis very strange  
He thus avoids us. Lady, is't not strange?  
Will he be truant to you too? It is a shame.

*Conrad.* Will 't please your highness enter, and accept  
The unworthy welcome of your servant's house?  
Leaving your cares to one whose diligence  
May in few hours make pleasures of them all. 80

*Otho.* Not so tedious, Conrad. No, no, no,—  
I must see Ludolph or the— What's that shout!

*Voices without.* Huzza! huzza! Long live the Emperor!

*Other Voices.* Fall back! Away there!

*Otho.* Say, what noise is that?

[ALBERT *advancing from the back of the Stage, whither he had  
hastened on hearing the cheers of the soldiery.*

*Albert.* It is young Gersa, the Hungarian prince,  
Pick'd like a red stag from the fallow herd  
Of prisoners. Poor prince, forlorn he steps,  
Slow, and demure, and proud in his despair.  
If I may judge by his so tragic bearing,  
His eye not downcast, and his folded arm, 90  
He doth this moment wish himself asleep  
Among his fallen captains on yon plains.

*Enter GERSA, in chains, and guarded.*

*Otho.* Well said, Sir Albert.

*Gersa.* Not a word of greeting.

No welcome to a princely visitor,  
Most mighty Otho? Will not my great host  
Vouchsafe a syllable, before he bids  
His gentlemen conduct me with all care  
To some securest lodgings?—cold perhaps!

*Otho.* What mood is this? Hath fortune touch'd thy brain?

*Gersa.* O kings and princes of this fev'rous world,  
What abject things, what mockeries must ye be, 101  
What nerveless minions of safe palaces!  
When here, a monarch, whose proud foot is used  
To fallen princes' necks, as to his stirrup,  
Must needs exclaim that I am mad forsooth,  
Because I cannot flatter with bent knees  
My conqueror!

*Otho.* Gersa, I think you wrong me:  
I think I have a better fame abroad.

*Gersa.* I prythee mock me not with gentle speech,  
But, as a favour, bid me from thy presence; 110  
Let me no longer be the wondering food

Of all these eyes; prythee command me hence!

*Otho.* Do not mistake me, Gersa. That you may not,  
Come, fair Auranthe, try if your soft hands  
Can manage those hard rivets to set free  
So brave a prince and soldier.

*Auranthe (sets him free).* Welcome task!

*Gersa.* I am wound up in deep astonishment!

Thank you, fair lady. *Otho!* emperor!

You rob me of myself; my dignity

Is now your infant; I am a weak child.

120

*Otho.* Give me your hand, and let this kindly grasp  
Live in our memories.

*Gersa.* In mine it will.

I blush to think of my unchasten'd tongue;  
But I was haunted by the monstrous ghost  
Of all our slain battalions. Sire, reflect,  
And pardon you will grant, that, at this hour,  
The bruised remnants of our stricken camp  
Are huddling undistinguish'd my dear friends,  
With common thousands, into shallow graves.

*Otho.* Enough, most noble Gersa. You are free  
To cheer the brave remainder of your host  
By your own healing presence, and that too,  
Not as their leader merely, but their king;  
For, as I hear, the wily enemy,  
Who eas'd the crownet from your infant brows,  
Bloody Taraxa, is among the dead.

131

*Gersa.* Then I retire, so generous *Otho* please,  
Bearing with me a weight of benefits  
Too heavy to be borne.

*Otho.* It is not so;  
Still understand me, King of Hungary,  
Nor judge my open purposes awry.  
Though I did hold you high in my esteem  
For your self's sake, I do not personate  
The stage-play emperor to entrap applause,  
To set the silly sort o' the world agape,  
And make the politic smile; no, I have heard  
How in the Council you condemn'd this war,  
Urging the perfidy of broken faith,—  
For that I am your friend.

140

*Gersa.* If ever, sire,  
You are mine enemy, I dare here swear  
'Twill not be Gersa's fault. *Otho,* farewell!

150

*Otho.* Will you return, Prince, to our banqueting?

*Gersa.* As to my father's board I will return.

*Otho.* Conrad, with all due ceremony, give

The prince a regal escort to his camp;  
Albert, go thou and bear him company.  
Gersa, farewell!

*Gersa.* All happiness attend you!

*Otho.* Return with what good speed you may; for soon  
We must consult upon our terms of peace.

[*Exeunt GERSA and ALBERT with others.*]

And thus a marble column do I build 160  
To prop my empire's dome. Conrad, in thee  
I have another stedfast one, to uphold  
The portals of my state; and, for my own  
Pre-eminence and safety, I will strive  
To keep thy strength upon its pedestal.  
For, without thee, this day I might have been  
A show-monster about the streets of Prague,  
In chains, as just now stood that noble prince:  
And then to me no mercy had been shown, 170  
For when the conquer'd lion is once dungeon'd,  
Who lets him forth again? or dares to give  
An old lion sugar-cates of mild reprieve?  
Not to thine ear alone I make confession,  
But to all here, as, by experience,  
I know how the great basement of all power  
Is frankness, and a true tongue to the world;  
And how intriguing secrecy is proof  
Of fear and weakness, and a hollow state.  
Conrad, I owe thee much.

*Conrad.* To kiss that hand,  
My emperor, is ample recompense, 180  
For a mere act of duty.

*Otho.* Thou art wrong;  
For what can any man on earth do more?  
We will make trial of your house's welcome,  
My bright Auranthe!

*Conrad.* How is Friedburg honoured!

*Enter ETHELBERT and six Monks.*

*Ethelbert.* The benison of heaven on your head,  
Imperial Otho!

*Otho.* Who stays me? Speak! Quick!

*Ethelbert.* Pause but one moment, mighty conqueror  
Upon the threshold of this house of joy.

*Otho.* Pray, do not prose, good Ethelbert, but speak  
What is your purpose. 190

*Ethelbert.* The restoration of some captive maids,  
Devoted to Heaven's pious ministries,

Who, being driven from their religious cells,  
 And kept in thralldom by our enemy,  
 When late this province was a lawless spoil,  
 Still weep amid the wild Hungarian camp,  
 Though hemm'd around by thy victorious arms.

*Otho.* Demand the holy sisterhood in our name  
 From Gersa's tents. Farewell, old Ethelbert.

199

*Ethelbert.* The saints will bless you for this pious care.

*Otho.* Daughter, your hand; Ludolph's would fit it best.

*Conrad.* Ho! let the music sound!

[*Music.* *ETHELBERT raises his hands, as in benediction of OTHO.*  
*Exeunt severally. The scene closes on them.*

SCENE III.—*The Country, with the Castle in the distance.*

*Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED.*

*Ludolph.* You have my secret; let it not be breath'd.

*Sigifred.* Still give me leave to wonder that the Prince  
 Ludolph and the swift Arab are the same;  
 Still to rejoice that 'twas a German arm  
 Death doing in a turban'd masquerade.

*Ludolph.* The Emperor must not know it, Sigifred.

*Sigifred.* I prythee, why? What happier hour of time  
 Could thy pleas'd star point down upon from heaven  
 With silver index, bidding thee make peace?

*Ludolph.* Still it must not be known, good Sigifred;  
 The star may point oblique.

11

*Sigifred.* If Otho knew  
 His son to be that unknown Mussulman  
 After whose spurring heels he sent me forth,  
 With one of his well-pleas'd Olympian oaths,  
 The charters of man's greatness, at this hour  
 He would be watching round the castle walls,  
 And, like an anxious warder, strain his sight  
 For the first glimpse of such a son return'd—  
 Ludolph, that blast of the Hungarians,  
 That Saracenic meteor of the fight,  
 That silent fury, whose fell Scymitar  
 Kept danger all aloof from Otho's head,  
 And left him space for wonder.

20

*Ludolph.* Say no more.  
 Not as a swordsman would I pardon claim,  
 But as a son. The bronzed centurion,  
 Long toil'd in foreign wars, and whose high deeds  
 Are shaded in a forest of tall spears,  
 Known only to his troop, hath greater plea



Of favour with my sire than I can have.

29

*Sigifred.* My lord, forgive me that I cannot see  
How this proud temper with clear reason squares.  
What made you then, with such an anxious love,  
Hover around that life, whose bitter days  
You vext with bad revolt? Was 't opium,  
Or the mad-fumed wine? Nay, do not frown,  
I rather would grieve with you than upbraid.

*Ludolph.* I do believe you. No, 'twas not to make  
A father his son's debtor, or to heal  
His deep heart-sickness for a rebel child.  
'Twas done in memory of my boyish days,  
Poor cancel for his kindness to my youth,  
For all his calming of my childish griefs,  
And all his smiles upon my merriment.  
No, not a thousand foughten fields could sponge  
Those days paternal from my memory,  
Though now upon my head he heaps disgrace.

40

*Sigifred.* My Prince, you think too harshly—

*Ludolph.* Can I so?

Hath he not gall'd my spirit to the quick?  
And with a sullen rigour obstinate  
Pour'd out a phial of wrath upon my faults?  
Hunted me as the Tartar does the boar,  
Driven me to the very edge o' the world,  
And almost put a price upon my head?

50

*Sigifred.* Remember how he spar'd the rebel lords.

*Ludolph.* Yes, yes, I know he hath a noble nature  
That cannot trample on the fallen. But his  
Is not the only proud heart in his realm.  
He hath wrong'd me, and I have done him wrong;  
He hath lov'd me, and I have shown him kindness;  
We should be almost equal.

*Sigifred.* Yet, for all this,  
I would you had appear'd among those lords,  
And ta'en his favour.

60

*Ludolph.* Ha! till now I thought  
My friend had held poor Ludolph's honour dear.  
What! would you have me sue before his throne  
And kiss the courtier's missal, its silk steps?  
Or hug the golden housings of his steed,  
Amid a camp, whose steeled swarms I dar'd  
But yesterday? And, at the trumpet sound,  
Bow like some unknown mercenary's flag,  
And lick the soiled grass? No, no, my friend,  
I would not, I, be pardon'd in the heap,  
And bless indemnity with all that scum,—

70

Those men I mean, who on my shoulders propp'd  
 Their weak rebellion, winning me with lies,  
 And pitying forsooth my many wrongs;  
 Poor self-deceived wretches, who must think  
 Each one himself a king in embryo,  
 Because some dozen vassals cry'd—my lord!  
 Cowards, who never knew their little hearts,  
 Till flurried danger held the mirror up, 80  
 And then they own'd themselves without a blush,  
 Curling, like spaniels, round my father's feet.  
 Such things deserted me and are forgiven,  
 While I, least guilty, am an outcast still,  
 And will be, for I love such fair disgrace.

*Sigifred.* I know the clear truth; so would Otho see,  
 For he is just and noble. Fain would I  
 Be pleader for you—

*Ludolph.* He'll hear none of it;  
 You know his temper, hot, proud, obstinate;  
 Endanger not yourself so uselessly. 90  
 I will encounter his thwart spleen myself,  
 To-day, at the Duke Conrad's, where he keeps  
 His crowded state after the victory.  
 There will I be, a most unwelcome guest,  
 And parley with him, as a son should do,  
 Who doubly loathes a father's tyranny;  
 Tell him how feeble is that tyranny;  
 How the relationship of father and son  
 Is no more valid than a silken leash  
 Where lions tug adverse, if love grow not 100  
 From interchanged love through many years.  
 Aye, and those turreted Franconian walls,  
 Like to a jealous casket, hold my pearl—  
 My fair Auranthe! Yes, I will be there.

*Sigifred.* Be not so rash; wait till his wrath shall pass,  
 Until his royal spirit softly ebbs  
 Self-influenced; then, in his morning dreams  
 He will forgive thee, and awake in grief  
 To have not thy good morrow.

*Ludolph.* Yes, to-day  
 I must be there, while her young pulses beat 110  
 Among the new-plum'd minions of the war.  
 Have you seen her of late? No? Auranthe,  
 Franconia's fair sister, 'tis I mean.  
 She should be paler for my troublous days—  
 And there it is—my father's iron lips  
 Have sworn divorcement 'twixt me and my right.

*Sigifred (aside).* Auranthe! I had hop'd this whim had pass'd.

*Ludolph.* And, Sigifred, with all his love of justice,  
When will he take that grandchild in his arms,  
That, by my love I swear, shall soon be his?  
This reconciliation is impossible,  
For see—but who are these?

120

*Sigifred.* They are messengers  
From our great emperor; to you, I doubt not,  
For couriers are abroad to seek you out.

*Enter THEODORE and GONFRED.*

*Theodore.* Seeing so many vigilant eyes explore  
The province to invite your highness back  
To your high dignities, we are too happy.

*Gonfred.* We have no eloquence to colour justly  
The emperor's anxious wishes.

*Ludolph.*

Go. I follow you.

[*Exeunt THEODORE and GONFRED.*]

I play the prude: it is but venturing—  
Why should he be so earnest? Come, my friend,  
Let us to Friedburg castle.

130

## ACT II

SCENE I.—*An Ante-chamber in the Castle.*

*Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED.*

*Ludolph.* No more advices, no more cautioning:  
I leave it all to fate—to any thing!  
I cannot square my conduct to time, place,  
Or circumstances; to me 'tis all a mist!

*Sigifred.* I say no more.

*Ludolph.* It seems I am to wait  
Here in the ante-room;—that may be a trifle.  
You see now how I dance attendance here,  
Without that tyrant temper, you so blame,  
Snapping the rein. You have medicin'd me  
With good advices; and I here remain,  
In this most honourable ante-room,  
Your patient scholar.

10

*Sigifred.* Do not wrong me, Prince.  
By Heavens, I'd rather kiss Duke Conrad's slipper,  
When in the morning he doth yawn with pride,  
Than see you humbled but a half-degree!  
Truth is, the Emperor would fain dismiss  
The nobles ere he sees you.

*Enter GONFRED from the Council-room.*

*Ludolph.*

Well, sir! What?

*Gonfred.* Great honour to the Prince! The Emperor,  
Hearing that his brave son had re-appeared,  
Instant dismiss'd the Council from his sight,  
As Jove fans off the clouds. Even now they pass.

20

[*Exit.*

*Enter the Nobles from the Council-room. They cross the stage,  
bowing with respect to LUDOLPH, he frowning on them.  
CONRAD follows. Exeunt Nobles.*

*Ludolph.* Not the discoloured poisons of a fen,  
Which he who breathes feels warning of his death,  
Could taste so nauseous to the bodily sense,  
As these prodigious sycophants disgust  
The soul's fine palate.

*Conrad.*

Princely Ludolph, hail!

Welcome, thou younger sceptre to the realm!  
Strength to thy virgin crownnet's golden buds,  
That they, against the winter of thy sire,  
May burst, and swell, and flourish round thy brows,  
Maturing to a weighty diadem!

30

Yet be that hour far off; and may he live,  
Who waits for thee, as the chapp'd earth for rain.  
Set my life's star! I have lived long enough,  
Since under my glad roof, propitiously,  
Father and son each other re-possess.

*Ludolph.* Fine wording, Duke! but words could never yet  
Forestall the fates; have you not learnt that yet?  
Let me look well: your features are the same;  
Your gait the same; your hair of the same shade;  
As one I knew some passed weeks ago,  
Who sung far different notes into mine ears.  
I have mine own particular comments on 't;  
You have your own, perhaps.

40

*Conrad.*

My gracious Prince,

All men may err. In truth I was deceived  
In your great father's nature, as you were.  
Had I known that of him I have since known,  
And what you soon will learn, I would have turn'd  
My sword to my own throat, rather than held  
Its threatening edge against a good King's quiet:  
Or with one word fever'd you, gentle Prince,  
Who seem'd to me, as rugged times then went,  
Indeed too much oppress'd. May I be bold

50

To tell the Emperor you will haste to him?

*Ludolph.* Your Dukedom's privilege will grant so much.

[*Exit CONRAD*]

He's very close to Otho, a tight leech!  
Your hand—I go. Ha! here the thunder comes  
Sullen against the wind! If in two angry brows  
My safety lies, then Sigifred, I'm safe.

*Enter OTHO and CONRAD.*

*Otho.* Will you make Titan play the lackey-page  
To chattering pigmies? I would have you know  
That such neglect of our high Majesty  
Annuls all feel of kindred. What is son,—  
Or friend,—or brother,—or all ties of blood,—  
When the whole kingdom, centred in ourself,  
Is rudely slighted? Who am I to wait?  
By Peter's chair! I have upon my tongue  
A word to fright the proudest spirit here!—  
Death!—and slow tortures to the hardy fool,  
Who dares take such large charter from our smiles!  
Conrad, we would be private. Sigifred!  
Off! And none pass this way on pain of death!

66

70

[*Excunt CONRAD and SIGIFRED.*]

*Ludolph.* This was but half expected, my good sire,  
Yet I am griev'd at it, to the full height,  
As though my hopes of favour had been whole.

*Otho.* How you indulge yourself! What can you hope for?

*Ludolph.* Nothing, my liege; I have to hope for nothing.  
I come to greet you as a loving son,  
And then depart, if I may be so free,  
Seeing that blood of yours in my warm veins  
Has not yet mitigated into milk.

80

*Otho.* What would you, sir?

*Ludolph.* A lenient banishment;  
So please you let me unmolested pass  
This Conrad's gates, to the wide air again.  
I want no more. A rebel wants no more.

*Otho.* And shall I let a rebel loose again  
To muster kites and eagles 'gainst my head?  
No, obstinate boy, you shall be kept cag'd up,  
Serv'd with harsh food, with scum for Sunday-drink.

*Ludolph.* Indeed!

*Otho.* And chains too heavy for your life:  
I'll choose a gaoler, whose swart monstrous face  
Shall be a hell to look upon, and she—

91

*Ludolph.*

Ha!

*Otho.* Shall be your fair Auranthe.

*Ludolph.*

Amaze! Amaze!

*Otho.* To-day you marry her.

*Ludolph.*

This is a sharp jest!

*Otho.* No. None at all. When have I said a lie?

*Ludolph.* If I sleep not, I am a waking wretch.

*Otho.* Not a word more. Let me embrace my child.

*Ludolph.* I dare not. 'Twould pollute so good a father!

O heavy crime! that your son's blinded eyes

Could not see all his parent's love aright,

100

As now I see it. Be not kind to me—

Punish me not with favour.

*Otho.*

Are you sure,

*Ludolph,* you have no saving plea in store?

*Ludolph.* My father, none!

*Otho.*

Then you astonish me.

*Ludolph.* No, I have no plea. Disobedience,

Rebellion, obstinacy, blasphemy,

Are all my counsellors. If they can make

My crooked deeds show good and plausible,

Then grant me loving pardon, but not else,

Good Gods! not else, in any way, my liege!

110

*Otho.* You are a most perplexing, noble boy.

*Ludolph.* You not less a perplexing noble father.

*Otho.* Well, you shall have free passport through the gates.

Farewell!

*Ludolph.* Farewell! and by these tears believe,

And still remember, I repent in pain

All my misdeeds!

*Otho.*

*Ludolph,* I will! I will!

But, *Ludolph,* ere you go, I would enquire

If you, in all your wandering, ever met

A certain Arab haunting in these parts.

*Ludolph.* No, my good lord, I cannot say I did.

120

*Otho.* Make not your father blind before his time;

Nor let these arms paternal hunger more

For an embrace, to dull the appetite

Of my great love for thee, my supreme child!

Come close, and let me breathe into thine ear.

I knew you through disguise. You are the Arab!

You can't deny it.

[*Embracing him.*]

*Ludolph.*

Happiest of days!

*Otho.* We'll make it so.

*Ludolph.*

'Stead of one fatted calf

Ten hecatombs shall bellow out their last,

Smote 'twixt the horns by the death-stunning mace

130

Of Mars, and all the soldiery shall feast  
Nobly as Nimrod's masons, when the towers  
Of Nineveh new kiss'd the parted clouds!

*Otho.* Large as a God speak out, where all is thine.

*Ludolph.* Aye, father, but the fire in my sad breast  
Is quench'd with inward tears! I must rejoice  
For you, whose wings so shadow over me  
In tender victory, but for myself  
I still must mourn. The fair Auranthe mine!  
Too great a boon! I prythee let me ask  
What more than I know of could so have changed  
Your purpose touching her?

140

*Otho.* At a word, this:  
In no deed did you give me more offense  
Than your rejection of Erminia.

To my appalling, I saw too good proof  
Of your keen-eyed suspicion,—she is naught!

*Ludolph.* You are convinc'd?

*Otho.* Aye, spite of her sweet looks.  
O, that my brother's daughter should so fall!  
Her fame has pass'd into the grosser lips  
Of soldiers in their cups.

*Ludolph.* 'Tis very sad.

150

*Otho.* No more of her. Auranthe—Ludolph, come!  
This marriage be the bond of endless peace!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Entrance of GERSA's Tent in the Hungarian Camp.*

*Enter ERMINIA.*

*Erminia.* Where! where! where shall I find a messenger?  
A trusty soul? A good man in the camp?  
Shall I go myself? Monstrous wickedness!  
O cursed Conrad! devilish Auranthe!  
Here is proof palpable as the bright sun!  
O for a voice to reach the Emperor's ears!

[*Shouts in the Camp.*]

*Enter an HUNGARIAN CAPTAIN.*

*Captain.* Fair prisoner, hear you those joyous shouts?  
The king—aye, now our king,—but still your slave,  
Young Gersa, from a short captivity  
Has just return'd. He bids me say, bright Dame,  
That even the homage of his ranged chiefs  
Cures not his keen impatience to behold  
Such beauty once again. What ails you, lady?

11

*Erminia.* Say, is not that a German, yonder? There!

*Captain.* Methinks by his stout bearing he should be—

Yes—'tis one Albert; a brave German knight,  
And much in the emperor's favour.

*Erminia.* I would fain  
Enquire of friends and kinsfolk; how they fared  
In these rough times. Brave soldier, as you pass  
To royal Gersa with my humble thanks,  
Will you send yonder knight to me?

20

*Captain.* I will.

[Exit.

*Erminia.* Yes, he was ever known to be a man  
Frank, open, generous; Albert I may trust.  
O proof! proof! proof! Albert's an honest man;  
Not Ethelbert the monk, if he were here,  
Would I hold more trustworthy. Now!

*Enter ALBERT.*

*Albert.* Good Gods!

Lady Erminia! are you prisoner  
In this beleaguer'd camp? Or are you here  
Of your own will? You pleas'd to send for me.  
By Venus, 'tis a pity I knew not  
Your plight before, and, by her Son, I swear  
To do you every service you can ask.  
What would the fairest—?

30

*Erminia.* Albert, will you swear?

*Albert.* I have. Well?

*Erminia.* Albert, you have fame to lose.  
If men, in court and camp, lie not outright,  
You should be, from a thousand, chosen forth  
To do an honest deed. Shall I confide—?

*Albert.* Aye, anything to me, fair creature. Do;  
Dictate my task. Sweet woman,—

*Erminia.* Truce with that.

You understand me not; and, in your speech,  
I see how far the slander is abroad.  
Without proof could you think me innocent?

40

*Albert.* Lady, I should rejoice to know you so.

*Erminia.* If you have any pity for a maid,  
Suffering a daily death from evil tongues;  
Any compassion for that Emperor's niece,  
Who, for your bright sword and clear honesty,  
Lifted you from the crowd of common men  
Into the lap of honour;—save me, knight!

*Albert.* How? Make it clear; if it be possible,  
I, by the banner of Saint Maurice, swear  
To right you.

50

*Erminia.* Possible!—Easy. O my heart!  
This letter's not so soil'd but you may read it;—



Possible! There—that letter! Read—read it.

[Gives him a letter.

*Albert (reading).* “To the Duke Conrad.—Forget the threat you made at parting, and I will forget to send the Emperor letters and papers of your’s I have become possessed of. His life is no trifle to me; his death you shall find none to yourself.” (*Speaks to himself:*) ’Tis me—my life that’s pleaded for! (*Reads.*) “He, for his own sake, will be dumb as the grave. Erminia has my shame fix’d upon her, sure as a wen. We are safe.

AURANTHE.”

A she-devil! A dragon! I her imp!  
Fire of Hell! Auranthe—lewd demon!  
Where got you this? Where? When?

*Erminia.* I found it in the tent, among some spoils  
Which, being noble, fell to Gersa’s lot.

Come in, and see. [They go in and return.

*Albert.* Villainy! Villainy!  
Conrad’s sword, his corslet, and his helm,  
And his letter. Caitiff, he shall feel—

70

*Erminia.* I see you are thunderstruck. Haste, haste away!

*Albert.* O I am tortured by this villainy.

*Erminia.* You needs must be. Carry it swift to Otho;  
Tell him, moreover, I am prisoner  
Here in this camp, where all the sisterhood,  
Forc’d from their quiet cells, are parcell’d out  
For slaves among these Huns. Away! Away!

*Albert.* I am gone.

*Erminia.* Swift be your steed! Within this hour  
The Emperor will see it.

*Albert.* Ere I sleep:

80

That I can swear.

[Hurries out.

*Gersa (without).* Brave captains! thanks. Enough  
Of loyal homage now!

Enter GERSA.

*Erminia.* Hail, royal Hun!

*Gersa.* What means this, fair one? Why in such alarm?  
Who was it hurried by me so distract?  
It seem’d you were in deep discourse together;  
Your doctrine has not been so harsh to him  
As to my poor deserts. Come, come, be plain.  
I am no jealous fool to kill you both,  
Or, for such trifles, rob the adorned world  
Of such a beauteous vestal.

*Erminia.* I grieve, my Lord,  
To hear you condescend to ribald phrase.

90

*Gersa.* This is too much! Harken, my lady pure!

*Erminia.* Silence! and hear the magic of a name—  
Erminia! I am she,—the Emperor's niece!  
Prais'd be the Heavens, I now dare own myself!

*Gersa.* Erminia! Indeed! I've heard of her.  
Prythee, fair lady, what chance brought you here?

*Erminia.* Ask your own soldiers.

*Gersa.* And you dare own your name.  
For loveliness you may—and for the rest  
My vein is not censorious.

*Erminia.* Alas! poor me!  
'Tis false indeed.

*Gersa.* Indeed you are too fair:  
The swan, soft leaning on her fledgy breast,  
When to the stream she launches, looks not back  
With such a tender grace; nor are her wings  
So white as your soul is, if that but be  
Twin-picture to your face. Erminia!  
To-day, for the first day, I am a king,  
Yet would I give my unworn crown away  
To know you spotless.

*Erminia.* Trust me one day more,  
Generously, without more certain guarantee,  
Than this poor face you deign to praise so much;  
After that, say and do whate'er you please.  
If I have any knowledge of you, sir,  
I think, nay I am sure, you will grieve much  
To hear my story. O be gentle to me,  
For I am sick and faint with many wrongs,  
Tir'd out, and weary-worn with contumelies.

*Gersa.* Poor lady!

*Enter* ETHELBERT.

*Erminia.* Gentle Prince, 'tis false indeed.  
Good morrow, holy father! I have had  
Your prayers, though I look'd for you in vain.

*Ethelbert.* Blessings upon you, daughter! Sure you look  
Too cheerful for these foul pernicious days.  
Young man, you heard this virgin say 'twas false,  
'Tis false, I say. What! can you not employ  
Your temper elsewhere, 'mong these burly tents,  
But you must taunt this dove, for she hath lost  
The Eagle Otho to beat off assault?  
Fie! fie! But I will be her guard myself;  
In the Emperor's name. I here demand of you  
Herself, and all her sisterhood. She false!

*Gersa.* Peace! peace, old man! I cannot think she is.

*Ethelbert.* Whom I have known from her first infancy,

Baptiz'd her in the bosom of the Church,  
Watch'd her, as anxious husbandmen the grain,  
From the first shoot till the unripe mid-May,  
Then to the tender ear of her June days,  
Which, lifting sweet abroad its timid green,  
Is blighted by the touch of calumny;  
You cannot credit such a monstrous tale.

*Gersa.* I cannot. Take her. Fair Erminia, 140  
I follow you to Friedburg,—is't not so?

*Erminia.* Aye, so we purpose.

*Ethelbert.* Daughter, do you so?  
How's this? I marvel! Yet you look not mad.

*Erminia.* I have good news to tell you, Ethelbert.

*Gersa.* Ho! ho, there! Guards!  
Your blessing, father! Sweet Erminia,  
Believe me, I am well nigh sure—

*Erminia.* Farewell! [Enter Chiefs.  
Short time will show.

Yes, father Ethelbert,  
I have news precious as we pass along. 149  
*Ethelbert.* Dear daughter, you shall guide me.

*Erminia.* To no ill.

*Gersa.* Command an escort to the Friedburg lines. [Exeunt Chiefs.

Pray let me lead. Fair lady, forget not  
Gersa, how he believ'd you innocent.  
I follow you to Friedburg with all speed. [Exeunt.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Country.*

*Enter ALBERT.*

*Albert.* O that the earth were empty, as when Cain  
Had no perplexity to hide his head!  
Or that the sword of some brave enemy  
Had put a sudden stop to my hot breath,  
And hurl'd me down the illimitable gulph  
Of times past, unremember'd! Better so  
Than thus fast-limed in a cursed snare,  
The white limbs of a wanton. This the end  
Of an aspiring life! My boyhood past  
In feud with wolves and bears, when no eye saw  
The solitary warfare, fought for love 11  
Of honour 'mid the growing wilderness.  
My sturdier youth, maturing to the sword,  
Won by the syren-trumpets, and the ring

Of shields upon the pavement, when bright-mail'd  
 Henry the Fowler pass'd the streets of Prague.  
 Was't to this end I louted and became  
 The menial of Mars, and held a spear  
 Sway'd by command, as corn is by the wind?  
 Is it for this, I now am lifted up 20  
 By Europe's throned Emperor, to see  
 My honour be my executioner,—  
 My love of fame, my prided honesty  
 Put to the torture for confessional?  
 Then the damn'd crime of blurting to the world  
 A woman's secret!—Though a fiend she be,  
 Too tender of my ignominious life;  
 But then to wrong the generous Emperor  
 In such a searching point, were to give up  
 My soul for foot-ball at Hell's holiday! 30  
 I must confess,—and cut my throat,—to-day?  
 To-morrow? Ho! some wine!

*Enter SIGIFRED.*

*Sigifred.* A fine humour—  
*Albert.* Who goes there? Count Sigifred? Ha! Ha!  
*Sigifred.* What, man, do you mistake the hollow sky  
 For a throng'd tavern,—and these stubbed trees  
 For old serge hangings,—me, your humble friend,  
 For a poor waiter? Why, man, how you stare!  
 What gipsies have you been carousing with?  
 No, no more wine; methinks you've had enough.  
*Albert.* You well may laugh and banter. What a fool  
 An injury may make of a staid man! 41  
 You shall know all anon.  
*Sigifred.* Some tavern brawl?  
*Albert.* 'Twas with some people out of common reach;  
 Revenge is difficult.  
*Sigifred.* I am your friend;  
 We meet again to-day, and can confer  
 Upon it. For the present I'm in haste.  
*Albert.* Whither?  
*Sigifred.* To fetch King Gersa to the feast.  
 The Emperor on this marriage is so hot,  
 Pray Heaven it end not in apoplexy!  
 The very porters, as I pass'd the doors, 50  
 Heard his loud laugh, and answer'd in full choir.  
 I marvel, Albert, you delay so long  
 From those bright revelries; go, show yourself,  
 You may be made a duke.  
*Albert.* Aye, very like:

Pray, what day has his Highness fix'd upon?

*Sigifred.* For what?

*Albert.* The marriage. What else can I mean?

*Sigifred.* To-day! O, I forgot, you could not know;  
The news is scarce a minute old with me.

*Albert.* Married to-day! To-day! You did not say so?

*Sigifred.* Now, while I speak to you, their comely heads  
Are bow'd before the mitre. 60

*Albert.* O! Monstrous!

*Sigifred.* What is this?

*Albert.* Nothing, Sigifred. Farewell!  
We'll meet upon our subject. Farewell, count!

[*Exit.*

*Sigifred.* Is this clear-headed Albert? He brain-turn'd!  
'Tis as portentous as a meteor.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

*Enter, as from the Marriage, OTHO, LUDOLPH, AURANTHE, CONRAD,  
Nobles, Knights, Ladies, &c. Music.*

*Otho.* Now, Ludolph! Now, Auranthe! Daughter fair!  
What can I find to grace your nuptial day  
More than my love, and these wide realms in fee?

*Ludolph.* I have too much.

*Auranthe.* And I, my liege, by far.

*Ludolph.* Auranthe! I have! O, my bride, my love!  
Not all the gaze upon us can restrain  
My eyes, too long poor exiles from thy face,  
From adoration, and my foolish tongue  
From uttering soft responses to the love  
I see in thy mute beauty beaming forth! 10  
Fair creature, bless me with a single word!  
All mine!

*Auranthe.* Spare, spare me, my Lord! I swoon else.

*Ludolph.* Soft beauty! by to-morrow I should die,  
Wert thou not mine. [*They talk apart.*

*First Lady.* How deep she has bewitch'd him!

*First Knight.* Ask you for her recipe for love philtres.

*Second Lady.* They hold the Emperor in admiration.

*Otho.* If ever king was happy, that am I!  
What are the cities 'yond the Alps to me,  
The provinces about the Danube's mouth,  
The promise of fair soil beyond the Rhone; 20  
Or routing out of Hyperborean hordes,  
To those fair children, stars of a new age?  
Unless perchance I might rejoice to win  
This little ball of earth, and chuck it them

To play with!

*Auranthe.* Nay, my Lord, I do not know.

*Ludolph.* Let me not famish.

*Otho (to Conrad).* Good Franconia,

You heard what oath I swear, as the sun rose,

That unless Heaven would send me back my son,

My Arab,—no soft music should enrich

The cool wine, kiss'd off with a soldier's smack;

30

Now all my empire, barter'd for one feast,

Seems poverty.

*Conrad.* Upon the neighbour-plain

The heralds have prepar'd a royal lists;

Your knights, found war-proof in the bloody field,

Speed to the game.

*Otho.* Well, Ludolph, what say you?

*Ludolph.* My lord!

*Otho.* A tourney?

*Conrad.* Or, if't please you best—

*Ludolph.* I want no more!

*First Lady.* He soars!

*Second Lady.*

Past all reason.

*Ludolph.* Though heaven's choir

Should in a vast circumference descend

And sing for my delight, I'd stop my ears!

40

Though bright Apollo's car stood burning here,

And he put out an arm to bid me mount,

His touch an immortality, not I!

This earth, this palace, this room, Auranthe!

*Otho.* This is a little painful; just too much.

Conrad, if he flames longer in this wise,

I shall believe in wizard-woven loves

And old romances; but I'll break the spell.

Ludolph!

*Conrad.* He will be calm, anon.

*Ludolph.* You call'd?

Yes, yes, yes, I offend. You must forgive me;

50

Not being quite recover'd from the stun

Of your large bounties. A tourney, is it not?

[*A senet heard faintly.*]

*Conrad.* The trumpets reach us.

*Ethelbert (without).*

On your peril, sirs,

Detain us!

*First Voice (without).* Let not the abbot pass.

*Second Voice (without).*

No,

On your lives!

*First Voice (without).* Holy Father, you must not.

*Ethelbert (without).* Otho!

*Otho.* Who calls on Otho?  
*Ethelbert (without).* Ethelbert!  
*Otho.* Let him come in.

*Enter* ETHELBERT *leading in* ERMINIA.

Thou cursed abbot, why  
 Hast brought pollution to our holy rites?  
 Hast thou no fear of hangman, or the faggot?  
*Ludolph.* What portent—what strange prodigy is this?  
*Conrad.* Away!  
*Ethelbert.* You, Duke?  
*Erminia.* Albert has surely fail'd me!  
 Look at the Emperor's brow upon me bent!  
*Ethelbert.* A sad delay!  
*Conrad.* Away, thou guilty thing!  
*Ethelbert.* You again, Duke? Justice, most mighty Otho!  
 You—go to your sister there and plot again,  
 A quick plot, swift as thought to save your heads;  
 For lo! the toils are spread around your den,  
 The word is all agape to see dragg'd forth  
 Two ugly monsters.

*Ludolph.* What means he, my lord?  
*Conrad.* I cannot guess.  
*Ethelbert.* Best ask your lady sister, 70  
 Whether the riddle puzzles her beyond  
 The power of utterance.

*Conrad.* Foul barbarian, cease;  
 The Princess faints!  
*Ludolph.* Stab him! O, sweetest wife!  
 [Attendants bear off AURANTHE.]

*Erminia.* Alas!  
*Ethelbert.* Your wife?  
*Ludolph.* Aye, Satan! does that yerk ye?  
*Ethelbert.* Wife! so soon!  
*Ludolph.* Aye, wife! Oh, impudence!  
 Thou bitter mischief! Venomous mad priest!  
 How dar'st thou lift those beetle brows at me?  
 Me—the prince Ludolph, in this presence here,  
 Upon my marriage-day, and scandalize  
 My joys with such opprobrious surprise? 80  
 Wife! Why dost linger on that syllable,  
 As if it were some demon's name pronounc'd  
 To summon harmful lightning, and make roar  
 The sleepy thunder? Hast no sense of fear?  
 No ounce of man in thy mortality?  
 Tremble! for, at my nod, the sharpen'd axe  
 Will make thy bold tongue quiver to the roots,

Those grey lids wink, and thou not know it more!  
*Ethelbert.* O, poor deceived Prince! I pity thee!  
 Great Otho! I claim justice—

*Ludolph.* Thou shalt hav 't!  
 Thine arms from forth a pulpit of hot fire  
 Shall sprawl distracted! O that that dull cowl  
 Were some most sensitive portion of thy life,  
 That I might give it to my hounds to tear!  
 Thy girdle some fine zealous-pained nerve  
 To girth my saddle! And those devil's beads  
 Each one a life, that I might, every day,  
 Crush one with Vulcan's hammer!

*Otho.* Peace, my son;  
 You far outstrip my spleen in this affair.  
 Let us be calm, and hear the abbot's plea  
 For this intrusion. 91

*Ludolph.* I am silent, sire.

*Otho.* Conrad, see all depart not wanted here.

[*Exeunt Knights, Ladies, &c.*]

Ludolph, be calm. Ethelbert, peace awhile.

This mystery demands an audience

Of a just judge, and that will Otho be.

*Ludolph.* Why has he time to breathe another word?

*Otho.* Ludolph, old Ethelbert, be sure, comes not  
 To beard us for no cause; he's not the man  
 To cry himself up an ambassador  
 Without credentials.

*Ludolph.* I'll chain up myself. 110

*Otho.* Old Abbot, stand here forth. Lady Erminia,  
 Sit. And now, Abbot! what have you to say?  
 Our ear is open. First we here denounce  
 Hard penalties against thee, if't be found  
 The cause for which you have disturb'd us here,  
 Making our bright hours muddy, be a thing  
 Of little moment.

*Ethelbert.* See this innocent!  
 Otho! thou father of the people call'd,  
 Is her life nothing? Her fair honour nothing?  
 Her tears from matins until even-song  
 Nothing? Her burst heart nothing? Emperor!  
 Is this your gentle niece—the simplest flower  
 Of the world's herbal—this fair lilly blanch'd  
 Still with the dews of piety, this meek lady  
 Here sitting like an angel newly-shent,  
 Who veils its snowy wings and grows all pale,—  
 Is she nothing? 120

*Otho.* What more to the purpose, abbot?



*Ludolph.* Whither is he winding?

*Conrad.* No clue yet!

*Ethelbert.* You have heard, my Liege, and so, no doubt, all here,

Foul, poisonous, malignant whisperings; 130

Nay open speech, rude mockery grown common,

Against the spotless nature and clear fame

Of the princess Erminia, your niece.

I have intruded here thus suddenly,

Because I hold those base weeds, with tight hand,

Which now disfigure her fair growing stem,

Waiting but for your sign to pull them up

By the dark roots, and leave her palpable,

To all men's sight, a Lady, innocent.

The ignominy of that whisper'd tale 140

About a midnight gallant, seen to climb

A window to her chamber neighbour'd near,

I will from her turn off, and put the load

On the right shoulders; on that wretch's head,

Who, by close stratagems, did save herself,

Chiefly by shifting to this lady's room

A rope-ladder for false witness.

*Ludolph.* Most atrocious!

*Otho.* Ethelbert, proceed.

*Ethelbert.* With sad lips I shall:

For in the healing of one wound, I fear

To make a greater. His young highness here 150

To-day was married.

*Ludolph.* Good.

*Ethelbert.* Would it were good!

Yet why do I delay to spread abroad

The names of those two vipers, from whose jaws

A deadly breath went forth to taint and blast

This guileless lady?

*Otho.* Abbot, speak their names.

*Ethelbert.* A minute first. It cannot be—but may

I ask, great judge, if you to-day have put

A letter by unread?

*Otho.* Does 't end in this?

*Conrad.* Out with their names!

*Ethelbert.* Bold sinner, say you so?

*Ludolph.* Out, tedious monk!

*Otho.* Confess, or by the wheel—

*Ethelbert.* My evidence cannot be far away; 161

And, though it never come, be on my head

The crime of passing an attaint upon

The slanderers of this virgin.

*Ludolph.* Speak aloud!

*Ethelbert.* Auranthe, and her brother there.

*Conrad.* Amaze!

*Ludolph.* Throw them from the windows!

*Otho.* Do what you will!

*Ludolph.* What shall I do with them?

Something of quick dispatch, for should she hear,  
My soft Auranthe, her sweet mercy would  
Prevail against my fury. Damned priest! 170  
What swift death wilt thou die? As to the lady  
I touch her not.

*Ethelbert.* Illustrious Otho, stay!  
An ample store of misery thou hast,  
Choak not the granary of thy noble mind  
With more bad bitter grain, too difficult  
A cud for the repentance of a man  
Grey-growing. To thee only I appeal,  
Not to thy noble son, whose yeasting youth  
Will clear itself, and crystal turn again.  
A young man's heart, by Heaven's blessing, is 180  
A wide world, where a thousand new-born hopes  
Empurple fresh the melancholy blood:  
But an old man's is narrow, tenantless  
Of hopes, and stuff'd with many memories,  
Which, being pleasant, ease the heavy pulse—  
Painful, clog up and stagnate. Weigh this matter  
Even as a miser balances his coin;  
And, in the name of mercy, give command  
That your knight Albert be brought here before you.  
He will expound this riddle; he will show 190  
A noon-day proof of bad Auranthe's guilt.

*Otho.* Let Albert straight be summon'd.

[Exit one of the Nobles.]

*Ludolph.* Impossible!

I cannot doubt—I will not—no—to doubt  
Is to be ashes!—wither'd up to death!

*Otho.* My gentle Ludolph, harbour not a fear;  
You do yourself much wrong.

*Ludolph.* O, wretched dolt!  
Now, when my foot is almost on thy neck,  
Wilt thou infuriate me? Proof! thou fool!  
Why wilt thou tease impossibility  
With such a thick-skull'd persevering suit? 200  
Fanatic obstinacy! Prodigy!  
Monster or folly! Ghost of a turn'd brain!  
You puzzle me,—you haunt me,—when I dream

Of you my brain will split! Bald sorcerer!  
Juggler! May I come near you? On my soul  
I know not whether to pity, curse, or laugh.

*Enter ALBERT, and the Nobleman.*

Here, Albert, this old phantom wants a proof!  
Give him his proof! A camel's load of proofs!

*Otho.* Albert, I speak to you as to a man  
Whose words once utter'd pass like current gold; 210  
And therefore fit to calmly put a close  
To this brief tempest. Do you stand possess'd  
Of any proof against the honourableness  
Of Lady Auranthe, our new-spoused daughter?

*Albert.* You chill me with astonishment. How's this?  
My Liege, what proof should I have 'gainst a fame  
Impossible of slur? [OTHO rises.

*Erminia.* O wickedness!

*Ethelbert.* Deluded monarch, 'tis a cruel lie.

*Otho.* Peace, rebel-priest!

*Conrad.* Insult beyond credence!

*Erminia.* Almost a dream!

*Ludolph.* We have awaken'd from 220  
A foolish dream that from my brow hath wrung  
A wrathful dew. O folly! why did I  
So act the lion with this silly gnat?  
Let them depart. Lady Erminia!

I ever griev'd for you, as who did not?  
But now you have, with such a brazen front,  
So most maliciously, so madly striven  
To dazzle the soft moon, when tenderest clouds  
Should be unloop'd around to curtain her;  
I leave you to the desert of the world 230  
Almost with pleasure. Let them be set free  
For me! I take no personal revenge  
More than against a nightmare, which a man  
Forgets in the new dawn.

[Exit LUDOLPH.

*Otho.* Still in extremes! No, they must not be loose.

*Ethelbert.* Albert, I must suspect thee of a crime  
So fiendish—

*Otho.* Fear'st thou not my fury, monk?

Conrad, be they in your sure custody  
Till we determine some fit punishment.  
It is so mad a deed, I must reflect 240  
And question them in private; for perhaps,  
By patient scrutiny, we may discover

Whether they merit death, or should be placed  
In care of the physicians.

[*Exeunt* OTHO and Nobles, ALBERT following.

Conrad. My guards, ho!

Erminia.

Albert, wilt thou follow there?

Wilt thou creep dastardly behind his back,  
And slink away from a weak woman's eye?  
Turn, thou court-Janus! thou forget'st thyself;  
Here is the Duke, waiting with open arms,

[*Enter Guards.*

250

To thank thee; here congratulate each other;  
Wring hands; embrace; and swear how lucky 'twas  
That I, by happy chance, hit the right man  
Of all the world to trust in.

Albert.

Trust! to me!

Conrad (*aside*). He is the sole one in this mystery.

Erminia. Well, I give up, and save my prayers for Heaven!  
You, who could do this deed, would ne'er relent,  
Though, at my words, the hollow prison-vaults  
Would groan for pity.

Conrad.

Manacle them both!

Ethelbert. I know it—it must be—I see it all!

Albert, thou art the minion!

Erminia.

Ah! too plain—

260

Conrad. Silence! Gag up their mouths! I cannot bear  
More of this brawling. That the Emperor  
Had plac'd you in some other custody!  
Bring them away.

[*Exeunt all but* ALBERT.

Albert. Though my name perish from the book of honour,  
Almost before the recent ink is dry,  
And be no more remember'd after death,  
Than any drummer's in the muster-roll;  
Yet shall I season high my sudden fall  
With triumph o'er that evil-witted duke!  
He shall feel what it is to have the hand  
Of a man drowning, on his hateful throat.

270

*Enter* GERSA and SIGIFRED.

Gersa. What discord is at ferment in this house?

Sigifred. We are without conjecture; not a soul  
We met could answer any certainty.

Gersa. Young Ludolph, like a fiery arrow, shot  
By us.

Sigifred. The Emperor, with cross'd arms, in thought.

Gersa. In one room music, in another sadness,  
Perplexity every where!

*Albert.* A trifle more!  
Follow; your presences will much avail  
To tune our jarred spirits. I'll explain.

280

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—AURANTHE'S *Apartment.*

AURANTHE and CONRAD *discovered.*

*Conrad.* Well, well, I know what ugly jeopardy  
We are cag'd in; you need not pester that  
Into my ears. Prythee, let me be spared  
A foolish tongue, that I may bethink me  
Of remedies with some deliberation.  
You cannot doubt but 'tis in Albert's power  
To crush or save us?

*Auranthe.* No, I cannot doubt.  
He has, assure yourself, by some strange means,  
My secret; which I ever hid from him,  
Knowing his mawkish honesty.

*Conrad.* Curs'd slave!

10

*Auranthe.* Ay, I could almost curse him now myself.  
Wretched impediment! Evil genius!  
A glue upon my wings, that cannot spread,  
When they should span the provinces! A snake,  
A scorpion, sprawling on the first gold step,  
Conducting to the throne, high canopied.

*Conrad.* You would not hear my council, when his life  
Might have been trodden out, all sure and hush'd;  
Now the dull animal forsooth must be  
Intreated, managed! When can you contrive  
The interview he demands?

20

*Auranthe.* As speedily  
It must be done as my brib'd woman can  
Unseen conduct him to me; but I fear  
'Twill be impossible, while the broad day  
Comes through the panes with persecuting glare.  
Methinks, if 't now were night I could intrigue  
With darkness, bring the stars to second me,  
And settle all this trouble.

*Conrad.* Nonsense! Child!  
See him immediately; why not now?

*Auranthe.* Do you forget that even the senseless door-posts 30  
Are on the watch and gape through all the house?  
How many whispers there are about,  
Hungry for evidence to ruin me;  
Men I have spurn'd, and women I have taunted?

Besides, the foolish prince sends, minute whiles,  
His pages—so they tell me—to enquire  
After my health, entreating, if I please,  
To see me.

*Conrad.* Well, suppose this Albert here;  
What is your power with him?

*Auranthe.* He should be  
My echo, my taught parrot! but I fear  
He will be cur enough to bark at me;  
Have his own say; read me some silly creed  
'Bout shame and pity.

40

*Conrad.* What will you do then?

*Auranthe.* What I shall do, I know not: what I would  
Cannot be done; for see, this chamber-floor  
Will not yield to the pick-axe and the spade,—  
Here is no quiet depth of hollow ground.

*Conrad.* Sister, you have grown sensible and wise,  
Seconding, ere I speak it, what is now,  
I hope, resolv'd between us.

*Auranthe.* Say, what is 't?

50

*Conrad.* You need not be his sexton too: a man  
May carry that with him shall make him die  
Elsewhere,—give that to him; pretend the while  
You will to-morrow succumb to his wishes,  
Be what they may, and send him from the Castle  
On some fool's errand; let his latest groan  
Frighten the wolves!

*Auranthe.* Alas! he must not die!

*Conrad.* Would you were both hears'd up in stifling lead!  
Detested—

*Auranthe.* Conrad, hold! I would not bear  
The little thunder of your fretful tongue,  
Tho' I alone were taken in these toils,  
And you could free me; but remember, sir,  
You live alone in my security:  
So keep your wits at work, for your own's sake,  
Not mine, and be more mannerly.

60

*Conrad.* Thou wasp!  
If my domains were emptied of these folk,  
And I had thee to starve—

*Auranthe.* O, marvellous!  
But Conrad, now be gone; the Host is look'd for;  
Cringe to the Emperor, entertain the Lords,  
And, do ye mind, above all things, proclaim  
My sickness, with a brother's sadden'd eye,  
Condoling with Prince Ludolph. In fit time  
Return to me.

70

*Conrad.* I leave you to your thoughts.

[*Exit.*

*Auranthe (sola)* Down, down, proud temper! down,  
Auranthe's pride!

Why do I anger him when I should kneel?  
Conrad! Albert! help! help! What can I do?  
O wretched woman! lost, wreck'd, swallow'd up,  
Accursed, blasted! O, thou golden Crown,  
Orbing along the serene firmament  
Of a wide empire, like a glowing moon; 80

And thou, bright sceptre! lustrous in my eyes,—  
There—as the fabled fair Hesperian tree,  
Bearing a fruit more precious! graceful thing,  
Delicate, godlike, magic! must I leave  
Thee to melt in the visionary air,  
Ere, by one grasp, this common hand is made  
Imperial? I do not know the time  
When I have wept for sorrow; but methinks  
I could now sit upon the ground, and shed  
Tears, tears of misery. O, the heavy day! 90  
How shall I bear my life till Albert comes?  
Ludolph! Erminia! Proofs! O heavy day!  
Bring me some mourning weeds, that I may 'tire  
Myself, as fits one wailing her own death:  
Cut off these curls, and brand this lilly hand,  
And throw these jewels from my loathing sight,—  
Fetch me a missal, and a string of beads,—  
A cup of bitter'd water, and a crust,—  
I will confess, O holy Abbot—How!  
What is this? Auranthe! thou fool, dolt, 100  
Whimpering idiot! up! up! act and quell!  
I am safe! Coward! why am I in fear?  
Albert! he cannot stickle, chew the cud  
In such a fine extreme,—impossible!  
Who knocks?

[*Goes to the Door, listens, and opens it.*

*Enter ALBERT.*

Albert, I have been waiting for you here  
With such an aching heart, such swooning throbs  
On my poor brain, such cruel—cruel sorrow,  
That I should claim your pity! Art not well?

*Albert.* Yes, lady, well.

*Auranthe.* You look not so, alas! 110  
But pale, as if you brought some heavy news.

*Albert.* You know full well what makes me look so pale.

*Auranthe.* No! Do I? Surely I am still to learn  
Some horror; all I know, this present, is  
I am near hustled to a dangerous gulph,

Which you can save me from,—and therefore safe,  
So trusting in thy love; that should not make  
Thee pale, my Albert.

*Albert.* It doth make me freeze.

*Auranthe.* Why should it, love?

*Albert.* You should not ask me that,  
But make your own heart monitor, and save  
Me the great pain of telling. You must know. 120

*Auranthe.* Something has vexed you, Albert. There are times  
When simplest things put on a sombre cast;  
A melancholy mood will haunt a man,  
Until most easy matters take the shape  
Of unachievable tasks; small rivulets  
Then seem impassable.

*Albert.* Do not cheat yourself  
With hope that gloss of words, or suppliant action,  
Or tears, or ravings, or self-threaten'd death,  
Can alter my resolve.

*Auranthe.* You make me tremble;  
Not so much at your threats, as at your voice. 130  
Untun'd. and harsh, and barren of all love.

*Albert.* You suffocate me! Stop this devil's parley,  
And listen to me; know me once for all.

*Auranthe.* I thought I did. Alas! I am deceiv'd.

*Albert.* No, you are not deceiv'd. You took me for  
A man detesting all inhuman crime;  
And therefore kept from me your demon's plot  
Against Erminia. Silent? Be so still;  
For ever! Speak no more; but hear my words,  
Thy fate. Your safety I have bought to-day 141  
By blazoning a lie, which in the dawn  
I'll expiate with truth.

*Auranthe.* O cruel traitor!

*Albert.* For I would not set eyes upon thy shame;  
I would not see thee dragg'd to death by the hair,  
Penanc'd, and taunted on a scaffolding!  
To-night, upon the skirts of the blind wood  
That blackens northward of these horrid towers,  
I wait for you with horses. Choose your fate.  
Farewell.

*Auranthe.* Albert, you jest; I'm sure you must. 151  
You, an ambitious Soldier! I, a Queen,  
One who could say,—Here, rule these Provinces!  
Take tribute from those cities for thyself!  
Empty these armouries, these treasuries,  
Muster thy warlike thousands at a nod!  
Go! conquer Italy!



*Albert.* Auranthe, you have made  
The whole world chaff to me. Your doom is fix'd.  
*Auranthe.* Out, villain! dastard!  
*Albert.* Look there to the door!  
Who is it?  
*Auranthe.* Conrad, traitor!  
*Albert.* Let him in.

*Enter CONRAD.*

Do not affect amazement, hypocrite, 160  
At seeing me in this chamber.

*Conrad.* Auranthe?

*Albert.* Talk not with eyes, but speak your curses out  
Against me, who would sooner crush and grind  
A brace of toads, than league with them to oppress  
An innocent lady, gull an Emperor,  
More generous to me than autumn's sun  
To ripening harvests.

*Auranthe.* No more insult, sir!

*Albert.* Aye, clutch your scabbard; but, for prudence sake,  
Draw not the sword; 'twould make an uproar, Duke,  
You would not hear the end of. At nightfall 170  
Your lady sister, if I guess aright,  
Will leave this busy castle. You had best  
Take farewell too of worldly vanities.

*Conrad.* Vassal!

*Albert.* To-morrow, when the Emperor sends  
For loving Conrad, see you fawn on him.  
Good even!

*Auranthe.* You'll be seen!

*Albert.* See the coast clear then.

*Auranthe (as he goes).* Remorseless Albert! Cruel,  
cruel wretch!

[*She lets him out.*]

*Conrad.* So, we must lick the dust?

*Auranthe.* I follow him.

*Conrad.* How? Where? The plan of your escape?

*Auranthe.* He waits

For me with horses by the forest-side, 180  
Northward.

*Conrad.* Good, good! he dies. You go, say you?

*Auranthe.* Perforce.

*Conrad.* Be speedy, darkness! Till that comes,  
Fiends keep you company! [*Exit.*]

*Auranthe.* And you! And you!  
And all men! Vanish!

[*Retires to an inner Apartment.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

*Enter LUDOLPH and Page.*

*Page.* Still very sick, my Lord; but now I went  
Knowing my duty to so good a Prince;  
And there her women in a mournful throng  
Stood in the passage whispering: if any  
Mov'd 'twas with careful steps and hush'd as death;  
They bid me stop.

*Ludolph.* Good fellow, once again  
Make soft enquiry; prythee be not stay'd  
By any hindrance, but with gentlest force  
Break through her weeping servants, till thou com'st  
E'en to her chamber door, and there, fair boy,  
If with thy mother's milk thou hast suck'd in  
Any diviner eloquence; woo her ears  
With plaints for me more tender than the voice  
Of dying Echo, echoed.

10

*Page.* Kindest master!  
To know thee sad thus, will unloose my tongue  
In mournful syllables. Let but my words reach  
Her ears and she shall take them coupled with  
Moans from my heart and sighs not counterfeit.  
May I speed better!

[*Exit Page.*

*Ludolph.* Auranthe! My Life!  
Long have I lov'd thee, yet till now not lov'd:  
Remembering, as I do, hard-hearted times  
When I had heard even of thy death perhaps,  
And thoughtless, suffered to pass alone  
Into Elysium! now I follow thee  
A substance or a shadow, wheresoe'er  
Thou leadest me,—whether thy white feet press,  
With pleasant weight, the amorous-aching earth,  
Or thro' the air thou pioneerest me,  
A shade! Yet sadly I predestinate!  
O unbenignest Love, why wilt thou let  
Darkness steal out upon the sleepy world  
So wearily; as if night's chariot wheels  
Were clog'd in some thick cloud. O, changeful Love,  
Let not her steeds with drowsy-footed pace  
Pass the high stars, before sweet embassy  
Comes from the pillow'd beauty of that fair  
Completion of all delicate nature's wit.  
Pout her faint lips anew with rubious health  
And with thine infant fingers lift the fringe  
Of her sick eyelids; that those eyes may glow

20

30

40

With wooing light upon me, ere the Morn  
Peers with disrelish, grey, barren, and cold.

*Enter GERSA and Courtiers.*

Otho calls me his Lion—should I blush  
To be so tam'd, so——

*Gersa.* Do me the courtesy

Gentlemen to pass on.

*Courtier.* We are your servants.

[*Exeunt Courtiers.*]

*Ludolph.* It seems then, Sir, you have found out the man  
You would confer with; me?

*Gersa.* If I break not

Too much upon your thoughtful mood, I will  
Claim a brief while your patience.

*Ludolph.* For what cause

Soe'er I shall be honour'd.

*Gersa.* I not less.

50

*Ludolph.* What may it be? No trifle can take place  
Of such deliberate prologue, serious 'haviour.  
But be it what it may I cannot fail  
To listen with no common interest—  
For though so new your presence is to me,  
I have a soldier's friendship for your fame—  
Please you explain.

*Gersa.* As thus—for, pardon me,

I cannot in plain terms grossly assault  
A noble nature; and would faintly sketch  
What your quick apprehension will fill up  
So finely I esteem you.

60

*Ludolph.* I attend—

*Gersa.* Your generous Father, most illustrious Otho,  
Sits in the Banquet room among his chiefs—  
His wine is bitter, for you are not there—  
His eyes are fix'd still on the open doors,  
And every passer in he frowns upon  
Seeing no Ludolph comes.

*Ludolph.* I do neglect—

*Gersa.* And for your absence, may I guess the cause?

*Ludolph.* Stay there! no—guess? more princely you must be—  
Than to make guesses at me. 'Tis enough,  
I'm sorry I can hear no more.

70

*Gersa.* And I

As griev'd to force it on you so abrupt;  
Yet one day you must know a grief whose sting  
Will sharpen more the longer 'tis conceal'd.

*Ludolph.* Say it at once, sir, dead, dead, is she dead?

*Gersa.* Mine is a cruel task: she is not dead—  
And would for your sake she were innocent—

*Ludolph.* Thou liest! thou amazest me beyond  
All scope of thought; convulsest my heart's blood  
To deadly churning—*Gersa* you are young  
As I am; let me observe you face to face;  
Not grey-brow'd like the poisonous Ethelbert,  
No rheumed eyes, no furrowing of age,  
No wrinkles where all vices nestle in  
Like crannied vermin—no, but fresh and young  
And hopeful featur'd. Ha! by heaven you weep  
Tears, human tears—Do you repent you then  
Of a curs'd torturer's office! Why shouldst join—  
Tell me, the league of Devils? Confess—confess  
The Lie.—

80

*Gersa.* Lie!—but begone all ceremonious points  
Of honour battailous. I could not turn  
My wrath against thee for the orb'd world.

90

*Ludolph.* Your wrath, weak boy? Tremble at mine unless  
Retraction follow close upon the heels  
Of that late stounding insult: why has my sword  
Not done already a sheer judgment on thee?  
Despair, or eat thy words. Why, thou wast nigh  
Whimpering away my reason: hark ye, Sir,  
It is no secret;—that Erminia,  
Erminia, Sir, was hidden in your tent;  
O bless'd asylum! comfortable home!  
Begone, I pity thee, thou art a Gull—  
Erminia's last new puppet—

100

*Gersa.* Furious fire!  
Thou mak'st me boil as hot as thou canst flame!  
And in thy teeth I give thee back the lie!  
Thou liest! Thou, Auranthe's fool, a wittol—

*Ludolph.* Look! look at this bright sword;  
There is no part of it to the very hilt  
But shall indulge itself about thine heart—  
Draw—but remember thou must cower thy plumes,  
As yesterday the Arab made thee stoop—

110

*Gersa.* Patience! not here, I would not spill thy blood  
Here underneath this roof where Otho breathes,  
Thy father—almost mine—

*Ludolph.* O faltering coward—

*Re-enter PAGE.*

Stay, stay, here is one I have half a word with—  
Well—What ails thee child?

*Page.*

My lord,

*Ludolph.* Good fellow!

*Page.* They are fled!

*Ludolph.* They—who?

*Page.* When anxiously

I hasten'd back, your grieving messenger,  
I found the stairs all dark, the lamps extinct,  
And not a foot or whisper to be heard. 120  
I thought her dead, and on the lowest step  
Sat listening; when presently came by  
Two muffled up,—one sighing heavily,  
The other cursing low, whose voice I knew  
For the Duke Conrad's. Close I follow'd them  
Thro' the dark ways they chose to the open air;  
And, as I follow'd, heard my lady speak.

*Ludolph.* Thy life answers the truth!

*Page.* The chamber's empty!

*Ludolph.* As I will be of mercy! So, at last,  
This nail is in my temples!

*Gersa.* Be calm in this. 130

*Ludolph.* I am.

*Gersa.* And Albert too has disappear'd;  
Ere I met you, I sought him everywhere;  
You would not hearken.

*Ludolph.* Which way went they, boy?

*Gersa.* I'll hunt with you.

*Ludolph.* No, no, no. My senses are  
Still whole. I have surviv'd. My arm is strong—  
My appetite sharp—for revenge! I'll no sharer  
In my feast; my injury is all my own,  
And so is my revenge, my lawful chattels!  
Terrier, ferret them out! Burn—burn the witch!  
Trace me their footsteps! Away!

140

[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—*A part of the Forest.*

*Enter CONRAD and AURANTHE.*

*Auranthe.* Go no further; not a step more; thou art  
A master-plague in the midst of miseries.  
Go—I fear thee. I tremble every limb,  
Who never shook before. There's moody death  
In thy resolved looks—Yes, I could kneel  
To pray thee far away. Conrad, go—  
There! yonder underneath the boughs I see  
Our horses!

*Conrad.* Aye, and the man.

*Auranthe.* Yes, he is there.

Go, go,—no blood, no blood; go, gentle Conrad!

*Conrad.* Farewell!

*Auranthe.* Farewell, for this Heaven pardon you. 10  
[Exit AURANTHE.]

*Conrad.* If he survive one hour, then may I die  
In unimagined tortures—or breathe through  
A long life in the foulest sink of the world!  
He dies—'tis well she do not advertise  
The caitiff of the cold steel at his back.

[Exit CONRAD.]

*Enter LUDOLPH and PAGE.*

*Ludolph.* Miss'd the way, boy, say not that on your peril!

*Page.* Indeed, indeed I cannot trace them further.

*Ludolph.* Must I stop here? Here solitary die?  
Stifled beneath the thick oppressive shade  
Of these dull boughs,—this oven of dark thickets,— 20  
Silent,—without revenge?—pshaw!—bitter end,—  
A bitter death,—a suffocating death,—  
A gnawing—silent—deadly, quiet death!  
Escap'd?—fled?—vanish'd? melted into air?  
She's gone! I cannot clutch her! no revenge!  
A muffled death, ensnar'd in horrid silence!  
Suck'd to my grave amid a dreamy calm!  
O, where is that illustrious noise of war,  
To smother up this sound of labouring breath,  
This rustle of the trees!

[AURANTHE shrieks at a distance.]

*Page.* My Lord, a noise! 30

This way—hark!

*Ludolph.* Yes, yes! A hope! A music!

A glorious clamour! How I live again! [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Forest.*

*Enter ALBERT (wounded).*

*Albert.* O for enough life to support me on  
To Otho's feet—

*Enter LUDOLPH.*

*Ludolph.* Thrice villainous, stay there!  
Tell me where that detested woman is  
Or this is through thee!

*Albert.* My good Prince, with me  
The sword has done its worst; not without worst

Done to another—Conrad has it home—

I see you know it all—

*Ludolph.* Where is his sister?

AURANTHE *rushes in.*

*Auranthe.* Albert!

*Ludolph.* Ha! There! there!—He is the paramour!—  
There—hug him—dying! O, thou innocence,  
Shrine him and comfort him at his last gasp,  
Kiss down his eyelids! Was he not thy love?  
Wilt thou forsake him at his latest hour?  
Keep fearful and aloof from his last gaze,  
His most uneasy moments, when cold death  
Stands with the door ajar to let him in?

16

*Albert.* O that that door with hollow slam would close  
Upon me sudden, for I cannot meet,  
In all the unknown chambers of the dead,  
Such horrors——

*Ludolph.* Auranthe! what can he mean?

What horrors? Is it not a joyous time?

20

Am I not married to a paragon

“Of personal beauty and untainted soul”?

A blushing fair-eyed Purity! A Sylph,

Whose snowy timid hand has never sin’d

Beyond a flower pluck’d, white as itself?

Albert, you do insult my Bride—your Mistress—

To talk of horrors on our wedding night.

*Albert.* Alas! poor Prince, I would you knew my heart.

’Tis not so guilty—

*Ludolph.* Hear you he pleads not guilty—

You are not? or if so what matters it?

30

You have escap’d me,—free as the dusk air—

Hid in the forest—safe from my revenge;

I cannot catch you—You should laugh at me,

Poor cheated Ludolph,—make the forest hiss

With jeers at me—You tremble; faint at once,

You will come to again. O Cockatrice,

I have you. Whither wander those fair eyes

To entice the Devil to your help, that he

May change you to a Spider, so to crawl

Into some cranny to escape my wrath?

40

*Albert.* Sometimes the counsel of a dying man

Doth operate quietly when his breath is gone—

Disjoin those hands—part—part, do not destroy

Each other—forget her—our miseries

Are equal shar’d, and mercy is—

*Ludolph.*

A boon

When one can compass it. Auranthe, try  
Your oratory—your breath is not so hitch'd—  
Aye, stare for help—

[ALBERT *groans and dies.*

There goes a spotted soul  
Howling in vain along the hollow night—  
Hear him—he calls you—Sweet Auranthe, come! 50

*Auranthe.* Kill me.

*Ludolph.* No! What? upon our Marriage-night!  
The earth would shudder at so foul a deed—  
A fair Bride, a sweet Bride, an innocent Bride!  
No, we must revel it, as 'tis in use  
In times of delicate brilliant ceremony:  
Come, let me lead you to our halls again—  
Nay, linger not—make no resistance sweet—  
Will you—Ah wretch, thou canst not, for I have  
The strength of twenty lions 'gainst a lamb—  
Now one adieu for Albert—come away.—

60

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*An inner Court of the Castle.*

*Enter SIGIFRED, GONFRED, and THEODORE meeting.*

*Theodore.* Was ever such a night?

*Sigifred.* What horrors more?

Things unbeliev'd one hour, so strange they are,  
The next hour stamps with credit.

*Theodore.* Your last news?

*Gonfred.* After the Page's story of the death  
Of Albert and Duke Conrad?

*Sigifred.* And the return  
Of Ludolph with the Princess.

*Gonfred.* No more save  
Prince Gersa's freeing Abbot Ethelbert,  
And the sweet lady, fair Erminia,  
From prison.

*Theodore.* Where are they now? hast yet heard?

*Gonfred.* With the sad Emperor they are closeted;  
I saw the three pass slowly up the stairs, 11  
The lady weeping, the old Abbot cowl'd.

*Sigifred.* What next?

*Theodore.* I ache to think on't.

*Gonfred.* 'Tis with fate.

*Theodore.* One while these proud towers are hush'd as death.  
*Gonfred.* The next our poor Prince fills the arched rooms  
With ghastly ravings.



*Sigifred.* I do fear his brain.

*Gonfred.* I will see more. Bear you so stout a heart?

[*Exeunt into the Castle.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Cabinet, opening towards a Terrace.*

OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, and a Physician, discovered.

*Otho.* O, my poor Boy! my Son! my Son! My Ludolph!  
Have ye no comfort for me, ye Physicians  
Of the weak Body and Soul?

*Ethelbert.* 'Tis not the Medicine  
Either of heaven or earth can cure unless  
Fit time be chosen to administer—

*Otho.* A kind forbearance, holy Abbot—come  
Erminia, here sit by me, gentle Girl;  
Give me thy hand—hast thou forgiven me?

*Erminia.* Would I were with the saints to pray for you! 9

*Otho.* Why will ye keep me from my darling child?

*Physician.* Forgive me, but he must not see thy face—

*Otho.* Is then a father's countenance a Gorgon?  
Hath it not comfort in it? Would it not  
Console my poor Boy, cheer him, heal his spirits?  
Let me embrace him, let me speak to him—  
I will—who hinders me? Who's Emperor?

*Physician.* You may not, Sire—'twould overwhelm him quite,  
He is so full of grief and passionate wrath,  
Too heavy a sigh would kill him—or do worse.  
He must be sav'd by fine contrivances— 20  
And most especially we must keep clear  
Out of his sight a Father whom he loves—  
His heart is full, it can contain no more,  
And do its ruddy office.

*Ethelbert.* Sage advice;  
We must endeavour how to ease and slacken  
The tight-wound energies of his despair,  
Not make them tenser—

*Otho.* Enough! I hear, I hear.  
Yet you were about to advise more—I listen.

*Ethelbert.* This learned doctor will agree with me,  
That not in the smallest point should he be thwarted  
Or gainsaid by one word—his very motions,  
Nods, becks and hints, should be obey'd with care, 31  
Even on the moment: so his troubled mind  
May cure itself—

*Physician.* There is no other means.

*Otho.* Open the door: let's hear if all is quiet—

*Physician.* Beseech you, Sire, forbear.

*Erminia.*

Do, do.

*Otho.*

I command!

Open it straight—hush!—quiet—my lost Boy!

My miserable Child!

*Ludolph (indistinctly without).* Fill, fill my goblet,—  
Here's a health!

*Erminia.* O, close the door!

*Otho.* Let, let me hear his voice; this cannot last—

And fain would I catch up his dying words

41

Though my own knell they be—this cannot last—

O let me catch his voice—for lo! I hear

This silence whisper me that he is dead!

It is so. Gersa?

*Enter GERSA.*

*Physician.* Say, how fares the prince?

*Gersa.* More calm—his features are less wild and flush'd—  
Once he complain'd of weariness—

*Physician.* Indeed!

'Tis good—'tis good—let him but fall asleep,  
That saves him.

*Otho.* Gersa, watch him like a child—

49

Ward him from harm—and bring me better news—

*Physician.* Humour him to the height. I fear to go;

For should he catch a glimpse of my dull garb,

It might affright him—fill him with suspicion

That we believe him sick, which must not be—

*Gersa.* I will invent what soothing means I can.

[*Exit GERSA.*

*Physician.* 'This should cheer up your Highness—weariness

Is a good symptom, and most favourable—

It gives me pleasant hopes. Please you walk forth

Onto the Terrace; the refreshing air

Will blow one half of your sad doubts away.

60

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*A Banqueting Hall, brilliantly illuminated, and set forth with all costly magnificence, with Supper-tables, laden with services of Gold and Silver. A door in the back scene, guarded by two Soldiers. Lords, Ladies, Knights, Gentlemen, &c., whispering sadly, and ranging themselves; part entering and part discovered.*

*First Knight.* Grievously are we tantaliz'd, one and all—

Sway'd here and there, commanded to and fro

As though we were the shadows of a dream

And link'd to a sleeping fancy. What do we here?

*Gonfred.* I am no Seer—you know we must obey

The prince from A to Z—though it should be  
To set the place in flames. I pray hast heard  
Where the most wicked Princess is?

*First Knight.* There, Sir,  
In the next room—have you remark'd those two  
Stout soldiers posted at the door?

*Gonfred.* For what? 10  
[*They whisper.*

*First Lady.* How ghast a train!

*Second Lady.* Sure this should be some splendid burial.

*First Lady.* What fearful whispering! See, see,—Gersa there.

*Enter GERSA.*

*Gersa.* Put on your brightest looks; smile if you can;  
Behave as all were happy; keep your eyes  
From the least watch upon him; if he speaks  
To any one, answer collectedly,  
Without surprise, his questions, howe'er strange.  
Do this to the utmost,—though, alas! with me  
The remedy grows hopeless! Here he comes,— 20  
Observe what I have said,—show no surprise.

*Enter LUDOLPH, followed by SIGIFRED and Page.*

*Ludolph.* A splendid company! rare beauties here!  
I should have Orphean lips, and Plato's fancy,  
Amphion's utterance, toned with his lyre,  
Or the deep key of Jove's sonorous mouth,  
To give fit salutation. Methought I heard,  
As I came in, some whispers,—what of that?  
'Tis natural men should whisper; at the kiss  
Of Psyche given by Love, there was a buzz  
Among the gods!—and silence is as natural. 30  
These draperies are fine, and, being a mortal,  
I should desire no better; yet, in truth,  
There must be some superiour costliness,  
Some wider-domed high magnificence!  
I would have, as a mortal I may not,  
Hanging of heaven's clouds, purple and gold,  
Slung from the spheres; gauzes of silver mist,  
Loop'd up with cords of twisted wreathed light,  
And tassell'd round with weeping meteors!  
These pendent lamps and chandeliers are bright 40  
As earthly fires from dull dross can be cleansed;  
Yet could my eyes drink up intenser beams  
Undazzled,—this is darkness,—when I close  
These lids, I see far fiercer brilliances,—  
Skies full of splendid moons, and shooting stars,

And spouting exhalations, diamond fires,  
And panting fountains quivering with deep glows!  
Yes—this is dark—is it not dark?

*Sigifred.* My Lord,  
'Tis late; the lights of festival are ever  
Quench'd in the morn.

*Ludolph.* 'Tis not to-morrow then? 50

*Sigifred.* 'Tis early dawn.

*Gersa.* Indeed full time we slept;  
Say you so, Prince?

*Ludolph.* I say I quarrell'd with you;  
We did not tilt each other,—that's a blessing,—  
Good gods! no innocent blood upon my head!

*Sigifred.* Retire, Gersa!

*Ludolph.* There should be three more here:  
For two of them, they stay away perhaps,  
Being gloomy-minded, haters of fair revels,—  
They know their own thoughts best.

As for the third,  
Deep blue eyes—semi-shaded in white lids,  
Finish'd with lashes fine for more soft shade, 60

Completed by her twin-arch'd ebon brows—  
White temples of exactest elegance,  
Of even mould felicitous and smooth—

Cheeks fashion'd tenderly on either side,  
So perfect, so divine that our poor eyes  
Are dazzled with the sweet proportioning,  
And wonder that 'tis so,—the magic chance!  
Her nostrils, small, fragrant, faery-delicate;  
Her lips—I swear no human bones e'er wore  
So taking a disguise—you shall behold her! 70

We'll have her presently; aye, you shall see her,  
And wonder at her, friends, she is so fair—  
She is the world's chief Jewel, and by heaven  
She's mine by right of marriage—she is mine!  
Patience, good people, in fit time I send  
A Summoner—she will obey my call,  
Being a wife most mild and dutiful.

First I would hear what music is prepared  
To herald and receive her—let me hear!

*Sigifred.* Bid the musicians soothe him tenderly. 80

[*A soft strain of Music.*]

*Ludolph.* Ye have none better—no—I am content;  
'Tis a rich sobbing melody, with reliefs  
Full and majestic; it is well enough,  
And will be sweeter, when ye see her pace  
Sweeping into this presence, glisten'd o'er

With emptied caskets, and her train upheld  
 By ladies, habited in robes of lawn,  
 Sprinkled with golden crescents; (others bright  
 In silks, with spangles shower'd,) and bow'd to  
 By Duchesses and pearled Margravines—  
 Sad, that the fairest creature of the earth—  
 I pray you mind me not—'tis sad, I say,  
 That the extremest beauty of the world  
 Should so entrench herself away from me,  
 Behind a barrier of engender'd guilt!

90

*Second Lady.* Ah! what a moan!

*First Knight.*

Most piteous indeed!

*Ludolph.* She shall be brought before this company,  
 And then—then—

*First Lady.* He muses.

*Gersa.* O, Fortune, where will this end?

*Sigifred.* I guess his purpose! Indeed he must not have  
 That pestilence brought in,—that cannot be,  
 There we must stop him. 100

*Gersa.* I am lost! Hush, hush!  
 He is about to rave again.

*Ludolph.* A barrier of guilt! I was the fool.  
 She was the cheater! Who's the cheater now,  
 And who the fool? The entrapp'd, the caged fool,  
 The bird-lim'd raven? She shall croak to death  
 Secure! Methinks I have her in my fist,  
 To crush her with my heel! Wait, wait! I marvel  
 My father keeps away: good friend, ah! Sigifred!  
 Do bring him to me—and Erminia 110  
 I fain would see before I sleep—and Ethelbert,  
 That he may bless me, as I know he will  
 Though I have curs'd him.

*Sigifred.* Rather suffer me  
 To lead you to them—

*Ludolph.* No, excuse me, no—  
 The day is not quite done—go bring them hither.

[*Exit SIGIFRED.*

Certes, a father's smile should, like sunlight,,  
 Slant on my sheafed harvest of ripe bliss—  
 Besides, I thirst to pledge my lovely Bride  
 In a deep goblet: let me see—what wine?  
 The strong Iberian juice, or mellow Greek?  
 Or pale Calabrian? Or the Tuscan grape?  
 Or of old Ætna's pulpy wine presses,  
 Black stain'd with the fat vintage, as it were  
 The purple slaughter-house, where Bacchus' self  
 Prick'd his own swollen veins? Where is my Page?

120

*Page.*

Here, here!

*Ludolph.* Be ready to obey me; anon thou shalt

Bear a soft message for me—for the hour

Draws near when I must make a winding up

Of bridal Mysteries—a fine-spun vengeance!

Carve it on my Tomb, that when I rest beneath

Men shall confess—This Prince was gull'd and cheated,

But from the ashes of disgrace he rose

More than a fiery Phœnix—and did burn

His ignominy up in purging fires—

Did I not send, Sir, but a moment past,

For my Father?

*Gersa.*

You did.

*Ludolph.*

Perhaps 'twould be

Much better he came not.

*Gersa.*

He enters now!

*Enter* OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, SIGIFRED, *and Physician.**Ludolph.* O thou good Man, against whose sacred head

I was a mad conspirator, chiefly too

For the sake of my fair newly wedded wife,

Now to be punish'd, do not look so sad!

Those charitable eyes will thaw my heart,

Those tears will wash away a just resolve,

A verdict ten times sworn! Awake—awake—

Put on a judge's brow, and use a tongue

Made iron-stern by habit! Thou shalt see

A deed to be applauded, 'scribed in gold!

Join a loud voice to mine, and so denounce

What I alone will execute!

*Otho.*

Dear son,

What is it? By your father's love, I sue

That it be nothing merciless!

*Ludolph.*

To that demon?

Not so! No! She is in temple-stall

Being garnish'd for the sacrifice, and I,

The Priest of Justice, will immolate her

Upon the altar of wrath! She stings me through!—

Even as the worm doth feed upon the nut,

So she, a scorpion, preys upon my brain!

I feel her gnawing here! Let her but vanish,

Then, father, I will lead your legions forth,

Compact in steeled squares, and speared files,

And bid our trumpets speak a fell rebuke

To nations drows'd in peace!

*Otho.*

To-morrow, Son,

Be your word law—forget to-day—

130

140

150

160

*Ludolph.* I will  
When I have finish'd it—now! now! I'm pight,  
Tight-footed for the deed!

*Erminia.* Alas! Alas!  
*Ludolph.* What Angel's voice is that? *Erminia!*  
Ah! gentlest creature, whose sweet innocence  
Was almost murder'd; I am penitent,  
Wilt thou forgive me? And thou, holy Man,  
Good *Ethelbert*, shall I die in peace with you? 170

*Erminia.* Die, my lord!  
*Ludolph.* I feel it possible.  
*Otho.* Physician?  
*Physician.* I fear me he is past my skill.  
*Otho.* Not so!  
*Ludolph.* I see it, I see it—I have been wandering—  
Half-mad—not right here—I forget my purpose.  
Bestir, bestir, *Auranthe!* ha! ha! ha!  
Youngster! Page! go bid them drag her to me!  
Obey! This shall finish it! [*Draws a dagger.*]

*Otho.* O my Son! my Son!  
*Sigifred.* This must not be—stop there!  
*Ludolph.* Am I obey'd?  
A little talk with her—no harm—haste! haste! [*Exit Page.*]  
180

Set her before me—never fear I can strike.  
*Several Voices.* My Lord! My Lord!  
*Gersa.* Good Prince!  
*Ludolph.* Why do ye trouble me? out—out—out away!  
There she is! take that! and that! no, no—  
That's not well done—Where is she?  
*The doors open. Enter Page. Several women are seen grouped  
about AURANTHE in the inner room.*  
*Page.* Alas! My Lord, my Lord! they cannot move her!  
Her arms are stiff,—her fingers clench'd and cold—  
*Ludolph.* She's dead!  
[*Staggers and falls into their arms.*]

*Ethelbert.* Take away the dagger.  
*Gersa.* Softly; so!  
*Otho.* Thank God for that!  
*Sigifred.* I fear it could not harm him.  
*Gersa.* No!—brief be his anguish!  
*Ludolph.* She's gone—I am content—Nobles, good night! 190  
We are all weary—faint—set ope the doors—  
I will to bed!—To-morrow— [*Dies.*]





KING STEPHEN  
A FRAGMENT OF A TRAGEDY  
WRITTEN IN NOVEMBER 1819



# KING STEPHEN

## A FRAGMENT OF A TRAGEDY

### ACT I.

#### SCENE I.—*Field of Battle.*

*Alarum. Enter King STEPHEN, Knights, and Soldiers.*

*Stephen.* If shame can on a soldier's vein-swoll'n front  
Spread deeper crimson than the battle's toil,  
Blush in your casing helmets! for see, see!  
Yonder my chivalry, my pride of war,  
Wrench'd with an iron hand from firm array,  
Are routed loose about the plashy meads,  
Of honour forfeit. O that my known voice  
Could reach your dastard ears, and fright you more!  
Fly, cowards, fly! Gloucester is at your backs!  
Throw your slack bridles o'er the flurried manes,  
Ply well the rowel with faint trembling heels,  
Scampering to death at last!

10

*First Knight.* The enemy  
Bears his flaunt standard close upon their rear.

*Second Knight.* Sure of a bloody prey, seeing the fens  
Will swamp them girth-deep.

*Stephen.* Over head and ears,  
No matter! 'Tis a gallant enemy;  
How like a comet he goes streaming on.  
But we must plague him in the flank,—hey, friends?  
We are well breathed,—follow!

*Enter Earl BALDWIN and Soldiers, as defeated.*

*Stephen.* De Redvers!  
What is the monstrous bugbear that can fright  
Baldwin?

20

*Baldwin.* No scare-crow, but the fortunate star  
Of boisterous Chester, whose fell truncheon now  
Points level to the goal of victory.  
This way he comes, and if you would maintain  
Your person unaffronted by vile odds,

Take horse, my Lord.

*Stephen.* And which way spur for life?

Now I thank Heaven I am in the toils,  
That soldiers may bear witness how my arm  
Can burst the meshes. Not the eagle more  
Loves to beat up against a tyrannous blast,  
Than I to meet the torrent of my foes.  
This is a brag,—be 't so,—but if I fall,  
Carve it upon my 'scutcheon'd sepulchre.  
On, fellow soldiers! Earl of Redvers, back!  
Not twenty Earls of Chester shall brow-beat  
The diadem.

30

[*Exeunt. Alarum.*]

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Field.*

*Trumpets sounding a Victory. Enter GLOCESTER, Knights, and Forces.*

*Glocester.* Now may we lift our bruised vizors up,  
And take the flattering freshness of the air,  
While the wide din of battle dies away  
Into times past, yet to be echoed sure  
In the silent pages of our chroniclers.

*First Knight.* Will Stephen's death be mark'd there, my good  
Lord,  
Or that we gave him lodging in yon towers?

*Glocester.* Fain would I know the great usurper's fate.

*Enter two Captains severally.*

*First Captain.* My Lord!

*Second Captain.* Most noble Earl!

*First Captain.* The King—

*Second Captain.* The Empress greets—

*Glocester.* What of the King?

*First Captain.* He sole and lone maintains 10

A hopeless bustle mid our swarming arms,  
And with a nimble savageness attacks,  
Escapes, makes fiercer onset, then anew  
Eludes death, giving death to most that dare  
Trespass within the circuit of his sword!  
He must by this have fallen. Baldwin is taken;  
And for the Duke of Bretagne, like a stag  
He flies, for the Welsh beagles to hunt down.  
God save the Empress!

*Glocester.* Now our dreaded Queen:  
What message from her Highness?

*Second Captain.* Royal Maud  
From the throng'd towers of Lincoln hath look'd down,  
Like Pallas from the walls of Ilion,

20

And seen her enemies havock'd at her feet.  
 She greets most noble Gloucester from her heart,  
 Intreating him, his captains, and brave knights,  
 To grace a banquet. The high city gates  
 Are envious which shall see your triumph pass;  
 The streets are full of music.

*Enter Second Knight.*

*Gloucester.* Whence come you?

*Second Knight.* From Stephen, my good Prince,—Stephen!  
 Stephen! 29

*Gloucester.* Why do you make such echoing of his name?

*Second Knight.* Because I think, my lord, he is no man,  
 But a fierce demon, 'nointed safe from wounds,  
 And misbaptized with a Christian name.

*Gloucester.* A mighty soldier!—Does he still hold out?

*Second Knight.* He shames our victory. His valour still  
 Keeps elbow-room amid our eager swords,  
 And holds our bladed falchions all aloof—  
 His gleaming battle-axe being slaughter-sick,  
 Smote on the morion of a Flemish knight,  
 Broke short in his hand; upon the which he flung  
 The heft away with such a vengeful force, 41  
 It paunch'd the Earl of Chester's horse, who then  
 Spleen-hearted came in full career at him.

*Gloucester.* Did no one take him at a vantage then?

*Second Knight.* Three then with tiger leap upon him flew,  
 Whom, with his sword swift-drawn and nimbly held,  
 He stung away again, and stood to breathe,  
 Smiling. Anon upon him rush'd once more  
 A throng of foes, and in this renew'd strife,  
 My sword met his and snapp'd off at the hilts. 50

*Gloucester.* Come, lead me to this Mars—and let us move  
 In silence, not insulting his sad doom  
 With clamorous trumpets. To the Empress bear  
 My salutation as befits the time.

[*Exeunt GLOUCESTER and Forces.*]

SCENE III.—*The Field of Battle. Enter STEPHEN unarmed.*

*Stephen.* Another sword! And what if I could seize  
 One from Bellona's gleaming armoury,  
 Or choose the fairest of her sheaved spears!  
 Where are my enemies? Here, close at hand,  
 Here come the testy brood. O for a sword!  
 I'm faint—a biting sword! A noble sword!  
 A hedge-stake—or a ponderous stone to hurl  
 With brawny vengeance, like the labourer Cain.  
 Come on! Farewell my kingdom, and all hail

Thou superb, plum'd, and helmeted renown,  
 All hail—I would not truck this brilliant day  
 To rule in Pylos with a Nestor's beard—  
 Come on!

*Enter DE KAIMS and Knights, &c.*

*De Kaims.* Is 't madness, or a hunger after death,  
 That makes thee thus unarm'd throw taunts at us?  
 Yield, Stephen, or my sword's point dip in  
 The gloomy current of a traitor's heart.

*Stephen.* Do it, De Kaims, I will not budge an inch.

*De Kaims.* Yes, of thy madness thou shalt take the meed.

*Stephen.* Darest thou?

*De Kaims.* How dare, against a man disarm'd?

*Stephen.* What weapons has the lion but himself?  
 Come not near me, De Kaims, for by the price 21  
 Of all the glory I have won this day,  
 Being a king, I will not yield alive  
 To any but the second man of the realm,  
 Robert of Glocester.

*De Kaims.* Thou shalt vail to me.

*Stephen.* Shall I, when I have sworn against it, sir?  
 Thou think'st it brave to take a breathing king,  
 That, on a court-day bow'd to haughty Maud,  
 The awed presence-chamber may be bold  
 To whisper, there's the man who took alive 30  
 Stephen—me—prisoner. Certes, De Kaims,  
 The ambition is a noble one.

*De Kaims.* 'Tis true,  
 And, Stephen, I must compass it.

*Stephen.* No, no,  
 Do not tempt me to throttle you on the gorge,  
 Or with my gauntlet crush your hollow breast,  
 Just when your knighthood is grown ripe and full  
 For lordship.

*A Soldier.* Is an honest yeoman's spear  
 Of no use at a need? Take that.

*Stephen.* Ah, dastard!

*De Kaims.* What, you are vulnerable! my prisoner!

*Stephen.* No, not yet. I disclaim it, and demand  
 Death as a sovereign right unto a king  
 Who 'sdains to yield to any but his peer,  
 If not in title, yet in noble deeds,  
 The Earl of Glocester. Stab to the hilts, De Kaims,  
 For I will never by mean hands be led  
 From this so famous field. Do ye hear! Be quick!

[*Trumpets. Enter the Earl of CHESTER and Knights.*

SCENE IV.—*A Presence Chamber. Queen MAUD in a Chair of State, the Earls of GLOCESTER and CHESTER, Lords, Attendants.*

*Maud.* Gloucester, no more: I will behold that Boulogne:  
Set him before me. Not for the poor sake  
Of regal pomp and a vain-glorious hour,  
As thou with wary speech, yet near enough,  
Hast hinted.

*Glocester.* Faithful counsel have I given;  
If wary, for your Highness' benefit.

*Maud.* The Heavens forbid that I should not think so,  
For by thy valour have I won this realm,  
Which by thy wisdom I will ever keep.  
To sage advisers let me ever bend  
A meek attentive ear, so that they treat  
Of the wide kingdom's rule and government,  
Not trenching on our actions personal.  
Advis'd, not school'd, I would be; and henceforth  
Spoken to in clear, plain, and open terms,  
Not side-ways sermon'd at.

*Glocester.* Then, in plain terms,  
Once more for the fallen king—

*Maud.* Your pardon, Brother,  
I would no more of that; for, as I said,  
'Tis not for worldly pomp I wish to see  
The rebel, but as dooming judge to give  
A sentence something worthy of his guilt.

*Glocester.* If't must be so, I'll bring him to your presence.

[*Exit GLOCESTER.*

*Maud.* A meaner summoner might do as well—  
My Lord of Chester, is 't true what I hear  
Of Stephen of Boulogne, our prisoner,  
That he, as a fit penance for his crimes,  
Eats wholesome, sweet, and palatable food  
Off Gloucester's golden dishes—drinks pure wine,  
Lodgest soft?

*Chester.* More than that, my gracious Queen,  
Has anger'd me. The noble Earl, methinks,  
Full soldier as he is, and without peer  
In counsel, dreams too much among his books.  
It may read well, but sure 'tis out of date  
To play the Alexander with Darius.

*Maud.* Truth! I think so. By Heavens it shall not last!

*Chester.* It would amaze your Highness now to mark  
How Gloucester overstrains his courtesy  
To that crime-loving rebel, that Boulogne—

*Maud.* That ingrate!

*Chester.* For whose vast ingratitude  
To our late sovereign lord, your noble sire,  
The generous Earl condoles in his mishaps,  
And with a sort of lackeying friendliness,  
Talks off the mighty frowning from his brow,  
Woos him to hold a duet in a smile,  
Or, if it please him, play an hour at chess—

40

*Maud.* A perjured slave!

*Chester.* And for his perjury,  
Glocester has fit rewards—nay, I believe,  
He sets his bustling household's wits at work  
For flatteries to ease this Stephen's hours,  
And make a heaven of his purgatory;  
Adorning bondage with the pleasant gloss  
Of feasts and music, and all idle shows  
Of indoor pageantry; while syren whispers,  
Predestin'd for his ear, 'scape as half-check'd  
From lips the courtliest and the rubiest  
Of all the realm, admiring of his deeds.

50

*Maud.* A frost upon his summer!

*Chester.* A queen's nod  
Can make his June December. Here he comes.



POEMS

WRITTEN LATE IN 1819



## POEMS WRITTEN LATE IN 1819

### A PARTY OF LOVERS:

*"A few Nonsense Verses" sent in a Letter to George Keats.*

PENSIVE they sit, and roll their languid eyes,  
Nibble their toast and cool their tea with sighs;  
Or else forget the purpose of the night,  
Forget their tea, forget their appetite.  
See, with cross'd arms they sit—Ah! happy crew,  
The fire is going out and no one rings  
For coals, and therefore no coals Betty brings.  
A fly is in the milk-pot. Must he die  
Circled by a humane society?  
No, no; there, Mr. Werter takes his spoon,  
Inserts it, dips the handle, and lo! soon  
The little straggler, sav'd from perils dark,  
Across the teaboard draws a long wet mark.

Romeo! Arise, take snuffers by the handle,  
There's a large cauliflower in each candle.  
A winding sheet—ah, me! I must away  
To No. 7, just beyond the circus gay.  
Alas, my friend, your coat sits very well;  
Where may your Tailor live? I may not tell.  
O pardon me. I'm absent now and then.  
Where *might* my Tailor live? I say again  
I cannot tell, let me no more be teased;  
He lives in Wapping, might live where he pleased.

### SONNET

THE day is gone, and all its sweets are gone!  
Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,  
Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,  
Bright eyes, accomplish'd shape, and lang'rous waist!  
Faded the flower and all its budded charms,  
Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,  
Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,  
Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise—

Vanish'd unseasonably at shut of eve,  
 When the dusk holiday- or holineight 10  
 Of fragrant-curtain'd love begins to weave  
 The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight;  
 But, as I've read love's missal through to-day,  
 He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

### LINES TO FANNY

WHAT can I do to drive away  
 Remembrance from my eyes? for they have seen,  
 Aye, an hour ago, my brilliant Queen!  
 Touch has a memory. O say, love, say,  
 What can I do to kill it and be free  
 In my old liberty?  
 When every fair one that I saw was fair,  
 Enough to catch me in but half a snare,  
 Not keep me there:  
 When, howe'er poor or particolour'd things, 10  
 My muse had wings,  
 And ever ready was to take her course  
 Whither I bent her force,  
 Unintellectual, yet divine to me;—  
 Divine, I say!—What sea-bird o'er the sea  
 Is a philosopher the while he goes  
 Winging along where the great water throes?

How shall I do  
 To get anew  
 Those moulted feathers, and so mount once more 20  
 Above, above  
 The reach of fluttering Love,  
 And make him cower lowly while I soar?  
 Shall I gulp wine? No, that is vulgarism,  
 A heresy and schism,  
 Foisted into the canon law of love;—  
 No,—wine is only sweet to happy men;  
 More dismal cares  
 Seize on me unawares,—  
 Where shall I learn to get my peace again? 30  
 To banish thoughts of that most hateful land,  
 Dungeoner of my friends, that wicked strand  
 Where they were wreck'd and live a wrecked life;  
 That monstrous region, whose dull rivers pour,  
 Ever from their sordid urns unto the shore,  
 Unown'd of any weedy-haired gods;  
 Whose winds, all zephyrless, hold scourging rods,

Iced in the great lakes, to afflict mankind;  
 Whose rank-grown forests, frosted, black, and blind,  
 Would fright a Dryad; whose harsh herbag'd meads  
 Make lean and lank the starv'd ox while he feeds;  
 There bad flowers have no scent, birds no sweet song,  
 And great unerring Nature once seems wrong. 43

O, for some sunny spell  
 To dissipate the shadows of this hell!  
 Say they are gone,—with the new dawning light  
 Steps forth my lady bright!  
 O, let me once more rest  
 My soul upon that dazzling breast!  
 Let once again these aching arms be plac'd, 50  
 The tender gaolers of thy waist!  
 And let me feel that warm breath here and there  
 To spread a rapture in my very hair,—  
 O, the sweetness of the pain!  
 Give me those lips again!  
 Enough! Enough! it is enough for me  
 To dream of thee!

## SONNET

TO FANNY

I CRY your mercy—pity—love!—aye, love!  
 Merciful love that tantalizes not,  
 One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless love,  
 Unmask'd, and being seen—without a blot!  
 O! let me have thee whole,—all—all—be mine!  
 That shape, that fairness, that sweet minor zest  
 Of love, your kiss,—those hands, those eyes divine,  
 That warm, white, lucent, million-pleasured breast,—  
 Yourself—your soul—in pity give me all, 10  
 Withhold no atom's atom or I die,  
 Or living on perhaps, your wretched thrall,  
 Forget, in the mist of idle misery,  
 Life's purposes,—the palate of my mind  
 Losing its gust, and my ambition blind!



THE FALL OF HYPERION

A DREAM

AN ATTEMPT MADE AT THE END OF 1819 TO  
RECONSTRUCT THE POEM





# THE FALL OF HYPERION

## A DREAM

### [CANTO I]

FANATICS have their dreams, wherewith they weave  
A paradise for a sect; the savage too  
From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep  
Guesses at Heaven; pity these have not  
Trac'd upon vellum or wild Indian leaf  
The shadows of melodious utterance.  
But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die;  
For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,  
With the fine spell of words alone can save  
Imagination from the sable chain 10  
And dumb enchantment. Who alive can say,  
"Thou art no Poet—may'st not tell thy dreams?"  
Since every man whose soul is not a clod  
Hath visions, and would speak, if he had loved,  
And been well nurtured in his mother tongue.  
Whether the dream now purpos'd to rehearse  
Be poet's or fanatic's will be known  
When this warm scribe my hand is in the grave.

Methought I stood where trees of every clime,  
Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech, 20  
With plantain, and spice-blossoms, made a screen;  
In neighbourhood of fountains (by the noise  
Soft-showering in my ears), and, (by the touch  
Of scent,) not far from roses. Turning round  
I saw an arbour with a drooping roof  
Of trellis vines, and bells, and larger blooms,  
Like floral censers, swinging light in air;  
Before its wreathed doorway, on a mound  
Of moss, was spread a feast of summer fruits,  
Which, nearer seen, seem'd refuse of a meal 30  
By angel tasted or our Mother Eve;  
For empty shells were scattered on the grass,  
And grape-stalks but half bare, and remnants more,  
Sweet-smelling, whose pure kinds I could not know.  
Still was more plenty than the fabled horn  
Thrice emptied could pour forth, at banqueting

For Proserpine return'd to her own fields,  
 Where the white heifers low. And appetite  
 More yearning than on Earth I ever felt  
 Growing within, I ate deliciously; 40  
 And, after not long, thirsted, for thereby  
 Stood a cool vessel of transparent juice  
 Sipp'd by the wander'd bee, the which I took,  
 And, pledging all the mortals of the world,  
 And all the dead whose names are in our lips,  
 Drank. That full draught is parent of my theme.  
 No Asian poppy nor elixir fine  
 Of the soon-fading jealous Caliphat;  
 No poison gender'd in close monkish cell,  
 To thin the scarlet conclave of old men, 50  
 Could so have rapt unwilling life away.  
 Among the fragrant husks and berries crush'd,  
 Upon the grass I struggled hard against  
 The domineering potion; but in vain:  
 The cloudy swoon came on, and down I sank,  
 Like a Silenus on an antique vase.  
 How long I slumber'd 'tis a chance to guess.  
 When sense of life return'd, I started up  
 As if with wings; but the fair trees were gone,  
 The mossy mound and arbour were no more: 60  
 I look'd around upon the carved sides  
 Of an old sanctuary with roof august,  
 Builded so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds  
 Might spread beneath, as o'er the stars of heaven;  
 So old the place was, I remember'd none  
 The like upon the Earth: what I had seen  
 Of grey cathedrals, buttress'd walls, rent towers,  
 The superannuations of sunk realms,  
 Or Nature's rocks toil'd hard in waves and winds,  
 Seem'd but the faulture of decrepit things 70  
 To that eternal domed Monument.—  
 Upon the marble at my feet there lay  
 Store of strange vessels and large draperies,  
 Which needs had been of dyed asbestos wove,  
 Or in that place the moth could not corrupt,  
 So white the linen, so, in some, distinct  
 Ran imageries from a sombre loom.  
 All in a mingled heap confus'd there lay  
 Robes, golden tongs, censer and chafing-dish,  
 Girdles, and chains, and holy jewelries. 80

Turning from these with awe, once more I rais'd  
 My eyes to fathom the space every way;

The embossed roof, the silent massy range  
 Of columns north and south, ending in mist  
 Of nothing, then to eastward, where black gates  
 Were shut against the sunrise evermore.—  
 Then to the west I look'd, and saw far off  
 An image, huge of feature as a cloud,  
 At level of whose feet an altar slept,  
 To be approach'd on either side by steps, 90  
 And marble balustrade, and patient travail  
 To count with toil the innumerable degrees.  
 Towards the altar sober-paced I went,  
 Repressing haste, as too unholy there;  
 And, coming nearer, saw beside the shrine  
 One minist'ring; and there arose a flame.—  
 When in mid-way the sickening East wind  
 Shifts sudden to the south, the small warm rain  
 Melts out the frozen incense from all flowers,  
 And fills the air with so much pleasant health 100  
 That even the dying man forgets his shroud;—  
 Even so that lofty sacrificial fire,  
 Sending forth Maian incense, spread around  
 Forgetfulness of everything but bliss,  
 And clouded all the altar with soft smoke;  
 From whose white fragrant curtains thus I heard  
 Language pronounc'd: "If thou canst not ascend  
 "These steps, die on that marble where thou art.  
 "Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,  
 "Will parch for lack of nutriment—thy bones 110  
 "Will wither in few years, and vanish so  
 "That not the quickest eye could find a grain  
 "Of what thou now art on that pavement cold.  
 "The sands of thy short life are spent this hour,  
 "And no hand in the universe can turn  
 "Thy hourglass, if these gummed leaves be burnt  
 "Ere thou canst mount up these immortal steps."  
 I heard, I look'd: two senses both at once,  
 So fine, so subtle, felt the tyranny  
 Of that fierce threat and the hard task proposed. 120  
 Prodigious seem'd the toil; the leaves were yet  
 Burning—when suddenly a palsied chill  
 Struck from the paved level up my limbs,  
 And was ascending quick to put cold grasp  
 Upon those streams that pulse beside the throat:  
 I shriek'd, and the sharp anguish of my shriek  
 Stung my own ears—I strove hard to escape  
 The numbness; strove to gain the lowest step.  
 Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace: the cold

Grew stifling, suffocating, at the heart; 30  
 And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not.  
 One minute before death, my iced foot touch'd  
 The lowest stair; and as it touch'd, life seem'd  
 To pour in at the toes: I mounted up,  
 As once fair angels on a ladder flew  
 From the green turf to Heaven—"Holy Power,"  
 Cried I, approaching near the horned shrine,  
 "What am I that should so be saved from death?  
 "What am I that another death come not  
 "To choke my utterance sacrilegious, here?" 140  
 Then said the veiled shadow—"Thou hast felt  
 "What 'tis to die and live again before  
 "Thy fated hour, that thou hadst power to do so  
 "Is thy own safety; thou hast dated on  
 Thy doom."—"High Prophetess," said I, "purge off,  
 Benign, if so it please thee, my mind's film."  
 "None can usurp this height," return'd that shade,  
 "But those to whom the miseries of the world  
 "Are misery, and will not let them rest.  
 "All else who find a haven in the world, 150  
 "Where they may thoughtless sleep away their days,  
 "If by a chance into this fane they come,  
 "Rot on the pavement where thou rottedst half."—  
 "Are there not thousands in the world," said I,  
 Encourag'd by the sooth voice of the shade,  
 "Who love their fellows even to the death,  
 "Who feel the giant agony of the world,  
 "And more, like slaves to poor humanity,  
 "Labour for mortal good? I sure should see  
 "Other men here; but I am here alone." 160  
 "Those whom thou spak'st of are no vision'ries,"  
 Rejoin'd that voice—"They are no dreamers weak,  
 "They seek no wonder but the human face;  
 "No music but a happy-noted voice—  
 "They come not here, they have no thought to come—  
 "And thou art here, for thou art less than they—  
 "What benefit canst thou, or all thy tribe,  
 "To the great world? Thou art a dreaming thing,  
 "A fever of thy:elf—think of the Earth;  
 "What bliss even in hope is there for thee? 170  
 "What haven? every creature hath its home;  
 "Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,  
 "Whether his labours be sublime or low—  
 "The pain alone; the joy alone; distinct:  
 "Only the dreamer venoms all his days,  
 "Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve.

"Therefore, that happiness be somewhat shar'd,  
 "Such things as thou art are admitted oft  
 "Into like gardens thou didst pass erewhile,  
 "And suffer'd in these temples: for that cause 180  
 "Thou standest safe beneath this statue's knees."  
 "That I am favour'd for unworthiness,  
 "By such propitious parley medicin'd  
 "In sickness not ignoble, I rejoice,  
 "Aye, and could weep for love of such award."  
 So answer'd I, continuing, "If it please,  
 "Majestic shadow, tell me: sure not all  
 "Those melodies sung into the World's ear  
 "Are useless: sure a poet is a sage;  
 "A humanist, physician to all men. 190  
 "That I am none I feel, as vultures feel  
 "They are no birds when eagles are abroad.  
 "What am I then: Thou spakest of my tribe:  
 "What tribe?" The tall shade veil'd in drooping white  
 Then spake, so much more earnest, that the breath  
 Moved the thin linen folds that drooping hung  
 About a golden censer from the hand  
 Pendent—"Art thou not of the dreamer tribe?  
 "The poet and the dreamer are distinct,  
 "Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes. 200  
 "The one pours out a balm upon the World,  
 "The other vexes it." Then shouted I  
 Spite of myself, and with a Pythia's spleen  
 "Apollo! faded! O far flown Apollo!  
 "Where is thy misty pestilence to creep  
 "Into the dwellings, through the door crannies  
 "Of all mock lyrists, large self worshipers  
 "And careless Hectorers in proud bad verse.  
 "Though I breathe death with them it will be life  
 "To see them sprawl before me into graves. 210  
 "Majestic shadow, tell me where I am,  
 "Whose altar this; for whom this incense curls;  
 "What image this whose face I cannot see,  
 "For the broad marble knees; and who thou art,  
 "Of accent feminine so courteous?"

Then the tall shade, in drooping linens veil'd  
 Spoke out, so much more earnest, that her breath  
 Stirr'd the thin folds of gauze that drooping hung  
 About a golden censer from her hand  
 Pendent; and by her voice I knew she shed 220  
 Long-treasured tears. "This temple, sad and lone,  
 "Is all spar'd from the thunder of a war

"Foughten long since by giant hierarchy  
 "Against rebellion: this old image here,  
 "Whose carved features wrinkled as he fell,  
 "Is Saturn's; I Moneta, left supreme  
 "Sole Priestess of this desolation."—

I had no words to answer, for my tongue,  
 Useless, could find about its roofed home  
 No syllable of a fit majesty 230

To make rejoinder to Moneta's mourn.  
 There was a silence, while the altar's blaze  
 Was fainting for sweet food: I look'd thereon,  
 And on the paved floor, where nigh were piled  
 Faggots of cinnamon, and many heaps  
 Of other crisped spice-wood—then again  
 I look'd upon the altar, and its horns  
 Whiten'd with ashes, and its lang'rous flame,  
 And then upon the offerings again;  
 And so by turns—till sad Moneta cried, 240  
 "The sacrifice is done, but not the less  
 "Will I be kind to thee for thy good will.

"My power, which to me is still a curse,  
 "Shall be to thee a wonder; for the scenes  
 "Still swooning vivid through my globed brain,  
 "With an electal changing misery,  
 "Thou shalt with these dull mortal eyes behold,  
 "Free from all pain, if wonder pain thee not."

As near as an immortal's sphered words  
 Could to a mother's soften, were these last: 250

And yet I had a terror of her robes,  
 And chiefly of the veils, that from her brow  
 Hung pale, and curtain'd her in mysteries,  
 That made my heart too small to hold its blood.  
 This saw that Goddess, and with sacred hand  
 Parted the veils. Then saw I a wan face,  
 Not pin'd by human sorrows, but bright-blanch'd  
 By an immortal sickness which kills not;  
 It works a constant change, which happy death  
 Can put no end to; deathwards progressing 260

To no death was that visage; it had past  
 The lilly and the snow; and beyond these  
 I must not think now, though I saw that face—  
 But for her eyes I should have fled away.  
 They held me back, with a benignant light,  
 Soft mitigated by divinest lids  
 Half-closed, and visionless entire they seem'd  
 Of all external things;—they saw me not,  
 But in blank splendour, beam'd like the mild moon,

Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not  
 What eyes are upward cast. As I had found 271  
 A grain of gold upon a mountain's side,  
 And twing'd with avarice strain'd out my eyes  
 To search its sullen entrails rich with ore,  
 So at the view of sad Moneta's brow,  
 I ask'd to see what things the hollow brain  
 Behind environed: what high tragedy  
 In the dark secret chambers of her skull  
 Was acting, that could give so dread a stress  
 To her cold lips, and fill with such a light 280  
 Her planetary eyes; and touch her voice  
 With such a sorrow—"Shade of Memory!"—  
 Cried I, with act adorant at her feet,  
 "By all the gloom hung round thy fallen house,  
 "By this last temple, by the golden age,  
 "By great Apollo, thy dear Foster Child,  
 "And by thyself, forlorn divinity,  
 "The pale Omega of a withered race,  
 "Let me behold, according as thou saidst,  
 "What in thy brain so ferments to and fro!" 290  
 No sooner had this conjuration pass'd  
 My devout lips, than side by side we stood  
 (Like a stunt bramble by a solemn pine)  
 Deep in the shady sadness of a vale,  
 Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,  
 Far from the fiery noon and eve's one star.  
 Onward I look'd beneath the gloomy boughs,  
 And saw, what first I thought an image huge,  
 Like to the image pedestal'd so high  
 In Saturn's temple. Then Moneta's voice 300  
 Came brief upon mine ear—"So Saturn sat  
 When he had lost his Realms—" whereon there grew  
 A power within me of enormous ken  
 To see as a god sees, and take the depth  
 Of things as nimbly as the outward eye  
 Can size and shape pervade. The lofty theme  
 At those few words hung vast before my mind,  
 With half-unravel'd web. I set myself  
 Upon an eagle's watch, that I might see,  
 And seeing ne'er forget. No stir of life 310  
 Was in this shrouded vale, not so much air  
 As in the zoning of a summer's day  
 Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,  
 But where the dead leaf fell there did it rest:  
 A stream went voiceless by, still deaden'd more  
 By reason of the fallen divinity

Spreading more shade; the Naiad 'mid her reeds  
 Prest her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large footmarks went  
 No farther than to where old Saturn's feet 320  
 Had rested, and there slept, how long a sleep!  
 Degraded, cold, upon the sodden ground  
 His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,  
 Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were clos'd,  
 While his bow'd head seem'd listening to the Earth,  
 His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;  
 But there came one who, with a kindred hand  
 Touch'd his wide shoulders after bending low 330  
 With reverence, though to one who knew it not.  
 Then came the griev'd voice of Mnemosyne,  
 And griev'd I hearken'd. "That divinity  
 "Whom thou saw'st step from yon forlornest wood,  
 "And with slow pace approach our fallen King,  
 "Is Thea, softest-natur'd of our Brood."  
 I mark'd the Goddess in fair statuary  
 Surpassing wan Moneta by the head,  
 And in her sorrow nearer woman's tears.  
 There was a listening fear in her regard, 340  
 As if calamity had but begun;  
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days  
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear  
 Was with its stored thunder labouring up.  
 One hand she press'd upon that aching spot  
 Where beats the human heart, as if just there,  
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain;  
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck  
 She laid, and to the level of his hollow ear  
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake . 350  
 In solemn tenor and deep organ tune;  
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue  
 Would come in this-like accenting; how frail  
 To that large utterance of the early Gods!

"Saturn! look up—and for what, poor lost King?  
 "I have no comfort for thee; no not one;  
 "I cannot say, wherefore thus sleepest thou?  
 "For Heaven is parted from thee, and the Earth  
 "Knows thee not, so afflicted, for a God;  
 "And Ocean too, with all its solemn noise,  
 "Has from thy sceptre pass'd, and all the air 360



"Is emptied of thine hoary majesty:  
 "Thy thunder, captious at the new command,  
 "Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;  
 "And thy sharp lightning, in unpracticed hands,  
 "Scorches and burns our once serene domain.  
 "With such remorseless speed still come new woes,  
 "That unbelief has not a space to breathe.  
 "Saturn! sleep on:—Me thoughtless, why should I  
 "Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?  
 "Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?  
 "Saturn, sleep on, while at thy feet I weep."

376

As when upon a tranced summer-night  
 Forests, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,  
 Dream, and so dream all night without a noise,  
 Save from one gradual solitary gust,  
 Swelling upon the silence; dying off;  
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave;  
 So came these words, and went; the while in tears  
 She prest her fair large forehead to the earth,  
 Just where her fallen hair might spread in curls,  
 A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.  
 Long, long these two were postured motionless,  
 Like sculpture builded-up upon the grave  
 Of their own power. A long awful time  
 I look'd upon them: still they were the same;  
 The frozen God still bending to the earth,  
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet,  
 Moneta silent. Without stay or prop,  
 But my own weak mortality, I bore  
 The load of this eternal quietude,  
 The unchanging gloom, and the three fixed shapes  
 Ponderous upon my senses, a whole moon.  
 For by my burning brain I measured sure  
 Her silver seasons shedded on the night,  
 And every day by day methought I grew  
 More gaunt and ghostly.—Oftentimes I pray'd  
 Intense, that Death would take me from the Vale  
 And all its burthens—gasping with despair  
 Of change, hour after hour I curs'd myself;  
 Until old Saturn rais'd his faded eyes,  
 And look'd around and saw his kingdom gone,  
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,  
 And that fair kneeling Goddess at his feet.  
 As the moist scent of flowers, and grass, and leaves,  
 Fills forest dells with a pervading air,  
 Known to the woodland nostril, so the words

376

390

400

Of Saturn fill'd the mossy glooms around,  
 Even to the hollows of time-eaten oaks,  
 And to the windings of the foxes' hole,  
 With sad low tones, while thus he spake, and sent  
 Strange musings to the solitary Pan.  
 "Moan, brethren, moan; for we are swallow'd up  
 "And buried from all Godlike exercise  
 "Of influence benign on planets pale,  
 "And peaceful sway above man's harvesting, 415  
 "And all those acts which Deity supreme  
 "Doth ease its heart of love in. Moan and wail,  
 "Moan, brethren, moan; for lo, the rebel spheres  
 "Spin round, the stars their ancient courses keep,  
 "Clouds still with shadowy moisture haunt the earth,  
 "Still suck their fill of light from sun and moon;  
 "Still buds the tree, and still the sea-shores murmur;  
 "There is no death in all the Universe, 423  
 "No smell of death—there shall be death—Moan, moan,  
 "Moan, Cybele, moan; for thy pernicious Babes  
 "Have changed a god into an aching Palsy.  
 "Moan, brethren, moan, for I have no strength left,  
 "Weak as the reed—weak—feeble as my voice—  
 "O, O, the pain, the pain of feebleness.  
 "Moan, moan, for still I thaw—or give me help;  
 "Throw down those imps, and give me victory. 431  
 "Let me hear other groans, and trumpets blown  
 "Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival,  
 "From the gold peaks of Heaven's high-piled clouds;  
 "Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir  
 "Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be  
 "Beautiful things made new for the surprise  
 "Of the sky-children." So he feebly ceas'd,  
 With such a poor and sickly sounding pause,  
 Methought I heard some old man of the earth 440  
 Bewailing earthly loss; nor could my eyes  
 And ears act with that pleasant unison of sense  
 Which marries sweet sound with the grace of form.  
 And dolorous accent from a tragic harp  
 With large-limb'd visions.—More I scrutinized:  
 Still fix'd he sat beneath the sable trees,  
 Whose arms spread straggling in wild serpent forms,  
 With leaves all hush'd; his awful presence there  
 (Now all was silent) gave a deadly lie  
 To what I erewhile heard—only his lips 450  
 Trembled amid the white curls of his beard.  
 They told the truth, though, round, the snowy locks  
 Hung nobly, as upon the face of heaven

A mid-day fleece of clouds. Thea arose,  
 And stretched her white arm through the hollow dark,  
 Pointing some whither: whereat he too rose  
 Like a vast giant, seen by men at sea  
 To grow pale from the waves at dull midnight.  
 They melted from my sight into the woods;  
 Ere I could turn, Moneta cried, "These twain  
 "Are speeding to the families of grief,  
 "Where roof'd in by black rocks they waste, in pain  
 "And darkness, for no hope."—And she spake on,  
 As ye may read who can unwearied pass  
 Onward from th' Antichamber of this dream,  
 Where even at the open doors awhile  
 I must delay, and glean my memory  
 Of her high phrase:—perhaps no further dare.

460

## END OF CANTO I

## CANTO II

"MORTAL, that thou may'st understand aright,  
 "I humanize my sayings to thine ear,  
 "Making comparisons of earthly things;  
 "Or thou might'st better listen to the wind,  
 "Whose language is to thee a barren noise,  
 "Though it blows legend-laden thro' the trees.—  
 "In melancholy realms big tears are shed,  
 "More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,  
 "Too huge for mortal tongue, or pen of scribe.  
 "The Titans fierce, self hid or prison bound,  
 "Groan for the old allegiance once more,  
 "Listening in their doom for Saturn's voice.  
 "But one of our whole eagle-brood still keeps  
 "His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty;  
 "Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire  
 "Still sits, still snuffs the incense teeming up  
 "From Man to the Sun's God: yet insecure.  
 "For as upon the earth dire prodigies  
 "Fright and perplex, so also shudders he:  
 "Nor at dog's howl or gloom-bird's Even screech,  
 "Or the familiar visitings of one  
 "Upon the first toll of his passing bell:  
 "But horrors, portioned to a giant nerve,  
 "Make great Hyperion ache. His palace bright,  
 "Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,  
 "And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,  
 "Glares a blood-red thro' all the thousand courts,

10

20

"Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries:  
 "And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds  
 "Flush angerly; when he would taste the wreaths 30  
 "Of incense breathed aloft from sacred hills,  
 "Instead of sweets, his ample palate takes  
 "Savour of poisonous brass and metals sick.  
 "Wherefore when harbour'd in the sleepy West,  
 "After the full completion of fair day,  
 "For rest divine upon exalted couch  
 "And slumber in the arms of melody,  
 "He paces through the pleasant hours of ease  
 "With strides colossal, on from hall to hall;  
 "While far within each aisle and deep recess 40  
 "His winged minions in close clusters stand  
 "Amaz'd, and full of fear; like anxious men,  
 "Who on a wide plain gather in sad troops,  
 "When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.  
 "Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy trance,  
 "Goes, step for step, with Thea from yon woods,  
 "Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,  
 "Is sloping to the threshold of the West.—  
 "Thither we tend."—Now in clear light I stood,  
 Reliev'd from the dusk vale. Mnemosyne 50  
 Was sitting on a square-edg'd polish'd stone,  
 That in its lucid depth reflected pure  
 Her priestess-garments.—My quick eyes ran on  
 From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,  
 Through bow'rs of fragrant and enwreathed light  
 And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades.  
 Anon rush'd by the bright Hyperion;  
 His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,  
 And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,  
 That scared away the meek ethereal hours, 60  
 And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared.

THE CAP AND BELLS  
OR THE JEALOUSIES  
A FAERY TALE—UNFINISHED



# THE CAP AND BELLS

## OR THE JEALOUSIES

A FAERY TALE—UNFINISHED

### I

IN midmost Ind, beside Hydaspes cool,  
There stood, or hover'd, tremulous in the air,  
A faery city, 'neath the potent rule  
Of Emperor Elfinan; fam'd ev'rywhere  
For love of mortal women, maidens fair,  
Whose lips were solid, whose soft hands were made  
Of a fit mould and beauty, ripe and rare,  
To pamper his slight wooing, warm yet staid:  
He lov'd girls smooth as shades, but hated a mere shade.

### II

This was a crime forbidden by the law;  
And all the priesthood of his city wept,  
For ruin and dismay they well foresaw,  
If impious prince no bound or limit kept,  
And faery Zendervester overstept;  
They wept, he sin'd, and still he would sin on,  
They dreamt of sin, and he sin'd while they slept;  
In vain the pulpit thunder'd at the throne,  
Caricature was vain, and vain the tart lampoon.

### III

Which seeing, his high court of parliament  
Laid a remonstrance at his Highness' feet,  
Praying his royal senses to content  
Themselves with what in faery land was sweet,  
Befitting best that shade with shade should meet:  
Whereat, to calm their fears, he promis'd soon  
From mortal tempters all to make retreat,—  
Aye, even on the first of the new moon,  
An immaterial wife to espouse as heaven's boon.

## IV

Meantime he sent a fluttering embassy  
 To Pigmio, of Imaus sovereign,  
 To half beg, and half demand, respectfully,  
 The hand of his fair daughter Bellanaine;  
 An audience had, and speeching done, they gain  
 Their point, and bring the weeping bride away;  
 Whom, with but one attendant, safely lain  
 Upon their wings, they bore in bright array,  
 While little harps were touch'd by many a lyric fay.

## V

As in old pictures tender cherubim  
 A child's soul thro' the sapphir'd canvas bear,  
 So, thro' a real heaven, on they swim  
 With the sweet princess on her plumag'd lair,  
 Speed giving to the winds her lustrous hair;  
 And so she journey'd, sleeping or awake,  
 Save when, for healthful exercise and air,  
 She chose to *promener à l'aile*, or take  
 A pigeon's somerset, for sport or change's sake.

## VI

"Dear Princess, do not whisper me so loud,"  
 Quoth Corallina, nurse and confidant,  
 "Do not you see there, lurking in a cloud,  
 Close at your back, that sly old Crafticant?  
 He hears a whisper plainer than a rant:  
 Dry up your tears, and do not look so blue;  
 He's Elfinan's great state-spy militant,  
 His running, lying, flying foot-man too,—  
 Dear mistress, let him have no handle against you!

## VII

"Show him a mouse's tail, and he will guess,  
 With metaphysic swiftness, at the mouse;  
 Show him a garden, and with speed no less,  
 He'll surmise sagely of a dwelling house,  
 And plot, in the same minute, how to chouse  
 The owner out of it; show him a"— "Peace!  
 Peace! nor contrive thy mistress' ire to rouse!"  
 Return'd the Princess, "my tongue shall not cease  
 Till from this hated match I get a free release.



## VIII

"Ah, beauteous mortal!" "Hush!" quoth Coralline,  
 "Really you must not talk of him, indeed."  
 "You hush!" replied the mistress, with a shine  
 Of anger in her eyes, enough to breed  
 In stouter hearts than nurse's fear and dread:  
 'Twas not the glance itself made nurse's flinch,  
 But of its threat she took the utmost heed;  
 Not liking in her heart an hour-long pinch,  
 Or a sharp needle run into her back an inch.

## IX

So she was silenc'd, and fair Bellanaine,  
 Writhing her little body with ennui,  
 Continued to lament and to complain,  
 That Fate, cross-purposing, should let her be  
 Ravish'd away far from her dear countree;  
 That all her feelings should be set at naught,  
 In trumping up this match so hastily,  
 With lowland blood; and lowland blood she thought  
 Poison, as every staunch true-born Imaian ought.

## X

Sorely she griev'd, and wetted three or four  
 White Provence rose-leaves with her faery tears,  
 But not for this cause;—alas! she had more  
 Bad reasons for her sorrow, as appears  
 In the fam'd memoirs of a thousand years,  
 Written by Crafticant, and published  
 By Parpaglion and Co., (those sly compeers  
 Who rak'd up ev'ry fact against the dead,)  
 In Scarab Street, Panthea, at the Jubal's Head.

## XI

Where, after a long hypercritic howl  
 Against the vicious manners of the age  
 He goes on to expose, with heart and soul,  
 What vice in this or that year was the rage,  
 Backbiting all the world in every page;  
 With special strictures on the horrid crime,  
 (Section'd and subsection'd with learning sage,)  
 Of faeries stooping on their wings sublime  
 To kiss a mortal's lips, when such were in their prime.

## XII

Turn to the copious index, you will find  
 Somewhere in the column, headed letter B,  
 The name of Bellanaine, if you're not blind;  
 Then pray refer to the text, and you will see  
 An article made up of calumny  
 Against this highland princess, rating her  
 For giving way, so over fashionably,  
 To this new-fangled vice, which seems a burr  
 Stuck in his moral throat, no coughing e'er could stir.

## XIII

There he says plainly that she lov'd a man!  
 That she around him flutter'd, flirted, toy'd,  
 Before her marriage with great Elfinan;  
 That after marriage too, she never joy'd  
 In husband's company, but still employ'd  
 Her wits to 'scape away to Angle-land;  
 Where liv'd the youth, who worried and annoy'd  
 Her tender heart, and its warm ardours fann'd  
 To such a dreadful blaze, her side would scorch her hand.

## XIV

But let us leave this idle tittle-tattle  
 To waiting-maids, and bed-room coteries,  
 Nor till fit time against her fame wage battle.  
 Poor Elfinan is very ill at ease,  
 Let us resume his subject if you please:  
 For it may comfort and console him much  
 To rhyme and syllable his miseries;  
 Poor Elfinan! whose cruel fate was such,  
 He sat and curs'd a bride he knew he could not touch.

## XV

Soon as (according to his promises)  
 The bridal embassy had taken wing,  
 And vanish'd, bird-like, o'er the suburb trees,  
 The Emperor, empierc'd with the sharp sting  
 Of love, retired, vex'd and murmuring  
 Like any drone shut from the fair bee-queen,  
 Into his cabinet, and there did fling  
 His limbs upon a sofa, full of spleen,  
 And damn'd his House of Commons, in complete chagrin.

## XVI

"I'll trounce some of the members," cried the Prince,  
"I'll put a mark against some rebel names,  
I'll make the Opposition-benches wince,  
I'll show them very soon, to all their shames,  
What 'tis to smother up a Prince's flames;  
That ministers should join in it, I own,  
Surprises me!—they too at these high games!  
Am I an Emperor? Do I wear a crown?  
Imperial Elfinan, go hang thyself or drown!

## XVII

"I'll trounce 'em!—there's the square-cut chancellor,  
His son shall never touch that bishopric;  
And for the nephew of old Palfior,  
I'll show him that his speech has made me sick,  
And give the colonelcy to Phalaric;  
The tiptoe marquis, moral and gallant,  
Shall lodge in shabby taverns upon tick;  
And for the Speaker's second cousin's aunt,  
She sha'n't be maid of honour,—by heaven that she sha'n't!

## XVIII

"I'll shirk the Duke of A.; I'll cut his brother;  
I'll give no garter to his eldest son;  
I won't speak to his sister or his mother!  
The Viscount B. shall live at cut-and-run;  
But how in the world can I contrive to stun  
That fellow's voice, which plagues me worse than any,  
That stubborn fool, that impudent state-dun,  
Who sets down ev'ry sovereign as a zany,—  
That vulgar commoner, Esquire Biancopany?

## XIX

"Monstrous affair! Pshaw! pah! what ugly minx  
Will they fetch from Imaus for my bride?  
Alas! my wearied heart within me sinks,  
To think that I must be so near allied  
To a cold dullard fay,—ah, woe betide!  
Ah, fairest of all human loveliness!  
Sweet Bertha! what crime can it be to glide  
About the fragrant pleatings of thy dress,  
Or kiss thine eyes, or count thy locks, tress after tress?"

## XX

So said, one minute's while his eyes remain'd  
 Half lidded, piteous, languid, innocent;  
 But, in a wink, their splendour they regain'd,  
 Sparkling revenge with amorous fury blent.  
 Love thwarted in bad temper oft has vent:  
 He rose, he stamp'd his foot, he rang the bell,  
 And order'd some death-warrants to be sent  
 For signature:—somewhere the tempest fell,  
 As many a poor felon does not live to tell.

## XXI

"At the same time Eban,"—(this was his page,  
 A fay of colour, slave from top to toe,  
 Sent as a present, while yet under age,  
 From the Viceroy of Zanguebar,—wise, slow,  
 His speech, his only words were "yes" and "no,"  
 But swift of look, and foot, and wing was he,—)  
 "At the same time, Eban, this instant go  
 To Hum the soothsayer, whose name I see  
 Among the fresh arrivals in our empery.

## XXII

"Bring Hum to me! But stay—here, take my ring,  
 The pledge of favour, that he not suspect  
 Any foul play, or awkward murdering,  
 Tho' I have bowstrung many of his sect;  
 Throw in a hint, that if he should neglect  
 One hour, the next shall see him in my grasp,  
 And the next after that shall see him neck'd,  
 Or swallow'd by my hunger-starved asp,—  
 And mention ('tis as well) the torture of the wasp."

## XXIII

These orders given, the Prince, in half a pet,  
 Let o'er the silk his propping elbow slide,  
 Caught up his little legs, and, in a fret,  
 Fell on the sofa on his royal side.  
 The slave retreated backwards, humble-eyed,  
 And with a slave-like silence clos'd the door,  
 And to old Hum thro' street and alley hied;  
 He "knew the city," as we say, of yore,  
 And for short cuts and turns, was nobody knew more.

## XXIV

It was the time when wholesale houses close  
Their shutters with a moody sense of wealth,  
But retail dealers, diligent, let loose  
The gas (objected to on score of health),  
Convey'd in little solder'd pipes by stealth,  
And make it flare in many a brilliant form,  
That all the powers of darkness it repell'th,  
Which to the oil-trade doth great scaith and harm,  
And supersedeth quite the use of the glow-worm.

## XXV

Eban, untempted by the pastry-cooks,  
(Of pastry he got store within the palace,)  
With hasty steps, wrapp'd cloak, and solemn looks,  
Incognito upon his errand sallies,  
His smelling-bottle ready for the allies;  
He pass'd the Hurdy-gurdies with disdain,  
Vowing he'd have them sent aboard the gallies;  
Just as he made his vow, it 'gan to rain,  
Therefore he call'd a coach, and bade it drive amain.

## XXVI

"I'll pull the string," said he, and further said,  
"Polluted Jarvey! Ah, thou filthy hack!  
Whose springs of life are all dried up and dead,  
Whose linsey-woolsey lining hangs all slack,  
Whose rug is straw, whose wholeness is a crack;  
And evermore thy steps go clatter-clitter;  
Whose glass once up can never be got back,  
Who prov'st, with jolting arguments and bitter,  
That 'tis of modern use to travel in a litter.

## XXVII

"Thou inconvenience! thou hungry crop  
For all corn! thou snail-creeper to and fro,  
Who while thou goest ever seem'st to stop,  
And fiddle-faddle standest while you go;  
I' the morning, freighted with a weight of woe,  
Unto some lazar-house thou journeyest,  
And in the evening tak'st a double row  
Of dowdies, for some dance or party drest,  
Besides the goods meanwhile thou movest east and west.

## XXVIII

“By thy ungallant bearing and sad mien,  
An inch appears the utmost thou couldst budge;  
Yet at the slightest nod, or hint, or sign,  
Round to the curb-stone patient dost thou trudge,  
School’d in a beckon, learned in a nudge,  
A dull-eyed Argus watching for a fare;  
Quiet and plodding, thou dost bear no grudge  
To whisking Tilburies, or Phaetons rare,  
Curricles, or Mail-coaches, swift beyond compare.”

## XXIX

Philosophizing thus, he pull’d the check,  
And bade the Coachman wheel to such a street,  
Who, turning much his body, more his neck,  
Louted full low, and hoarsely did him greet:  
“Certes, Monsieur were best take to his feet,  
Seeing his servant can no further drive  
For press of coaches, that to-night here meet  
Many as bees about a straw-capp’d hive,  
When first for April honey into faint flowers they dive.”

## XXX

Eban then paid his fare, and tiptoe went  
To Hum’s hotel; and, as he on did pass  
With head inclin’d, each dusky lineament  
Show’d in the pearl-pav’d street, as in a glass;  
His purple vest, that ever peeping was  
Rich from the fluttering crimson of his cloak,  
His silvery trowsers, and his silken sash  
Tied in a burnish’d knot, their semblance took  
Upon the mirror’d walls, wherever he might look.

## XXXI

He smil’d at self, and, smiling, show’d his teeth,  
And seeing his white teeth, he smil’d the more;  
Lifted his eye-brows, spurn’d the path beneath,  
Show’d teeth again, and smil’d as heretofore,  
Until he knock’d at the magician’s door;  
Where, till the porter answer’d, might be seen,  
In the clear panel more he could adore,—  
His turban wreath’d of gold, and white, and green,  
Mustachios, ear-ring, nose-ring, and his sabre keen.

## XXXII

“Does not your master give a rout to-night?”  
 Quoth the dark page. “Oh, no!” return’d the Swiss,  
 “Next door but one to us, upon the right,  
 The *Magazin des Modes* now open is  
 Against the Emperor’s wedding;—and, sir, this  
 My master finds a monstrous horrid bore;  
 As he retir’d, an hour ago I wis,  
 With his best beard and brimstone, to explore  
 And cast a quiet figure in his second floor.

## XXXIII

“Gad! he’s oblig’d to stick to business!  
 For chalk, I hear, stands at a pretty price;  
 And as for aqua vitæ—there’s a mess!  
 The *dentes sapientiæ* of mice,  
 Our barber tells me too, are on the rise,—  
 Tinder’s a lighter article,—nitre pure  
 Goes off like lightning,—grains of Paradise  
 At an enormous figure!—stars not sure!—  
 Zodiac will not move without a sly *douceur*!

## XXXIV

“Venus won’t stir a peg without a fee,  
 And master is too partial, *entre nous*,  
 To”— “Hush—hush!” cried Eban, “sure that is he  
 Coming down stairs,—by St. Bartholomew!  
 As backwards as he can,—is ’t something new?  
 Or is ’t his custom, in the name of fun?”  
 “He always comes down backward, with one shoe”—  
 Return’d the porter—“off, and one shoe on,  
 Like, saving shoe for sock or stocking, my man John!”

## XXXV

It was indeed the great Magician,  
 Feeling, with careful toe, for every stair,  
 And retrograding careful as he can,  
 Backwards and downwards from his own two pair:  
 “Salpietro!” exclaim’d Hum, “is the dog there?  
 He’s always in my way upon the mat!”  
 “He’s in the kitchen, or the Lord knows where,”—  
 Replied the Swiss,—“the nasty, yelping brat!”  
 “Don’t beat him!” return’d Hum, and on the floor came pat.

## XXXVI

Then facing right about, he saw the Page,  
 And said: "Don't tell me what you want, Eban;  
 The Emperor is now in a huge rage,—  
 'Tis nine to one he'll give you the rattan!  
 Let us away!" Away together ran  
 The plain-dress'd sage and spangled blackamoor,  
 Nor rested till they stood to cool, and fan,  
 And breathe themselves at the Emperor's chamber door,  
 When Eban thought he heard a soft imperial snore.

## XXXVII

"I thought you guess'd, foretold, or prophesied,  
 That 's Majesty was in a raving fit?"  
 "He dreams," said Hum, "or I have ever lied,  
 That he is tearing you, sir, bit by bit."  
 "He's not asleep, and you have little wit,"  
 Replied the page: "that little buzzing noise,  
 Whate'er your palmistry may make of it,  
 Comes from a play-thing of the Emperor's choice,  
 From a Man-Tiger-Organ, prettiest of his toys."

## XXXVIII

Eban then usher'd in the learned Seer:  
 Elfinan's back was turn'd, but, ne'ertheless,  
 Both, prostrate on the carpet, ear by ear,  
 Crept silently, and waited in distress,  
 Knowing the Emperor's moody bitterness;  
 Eban especially, who on the floor 'gan  
 Tremble and quake to death,—he feared less  
 A dose of senna-tea or nightmare Gorgon  
 Than the Emperor when he play'd on his Man-Tiger-Organ.

## XXXIX

They kiss'd nine times the carpet's velvet face  
 Of glossy silk, soft, smooth, and meadow-green,  
 Where the close eye in deep rich fur might trace  
 A silver tissue, scantily to be seen,  
 As daisies lurk'd in June-grass, buds in treen;  
 Sudden the music ceased, sudden the hand  
 Of majesty, by dint of passion keen,  
 Doubled into a common fist, went grand,  
 And knock'd down three cut glasses, and his best ink-stand.



## XL

Then turning round, he saw those trembling two:  
 "Eban," said he, "as slaves should taste the fruits  
 Of diligence, I shall remember you  
 To-morrow, or the next day, as time suits,  
 In a finger conversation with my mutes,—  
 Begone!—for you, Chaldean! here remain!  
 Fear not, quake not, and as good wine recruits  
 A conjurer's spirits, what cup will you drain?  
 Sherry in silver, hock in gold, or glass'd champagne?"

## XLI

"Commander of the Faithful!" answer'd Hum,  
 "In preference to these, I'll merely taste  
 A thimble-full of old Jamaica rum."  
 "A simple boon!" said Elfinan; "thou may'st  
 Have Nantz, with which my morning-coffee's lac'd."  
 "I'll have a glass of Nantz, then," said the Seer,—  
 "Made racy—(sure my boldness is misplac'd!)—  
 With the third part—(yet that is drinking dear!)—  
 Of the least drop of *crème de citron*, crystal clear."

## XLII

"I pledge you, Hum! and pledge my dearest love,  
 My Bertha!" "Bertha! Bertha!" cried the sage,  
 "I know a many Berthas!" "Mine's above  
 All Berthas!" sighed the Emperor. "I engage,"  
 Said Hum, "in duty, and in vassalage,  
 To mention all the Berthas in the Earth;—  
 There's Bertha Watson,—and Miss Bertha Page,—  
 This fam'd for languid eyes, and that for mirth,—  
 There's Bertha Blount of York,—and Bertha Knox of Perth."

## XLIII

"You seem to know"—"I do know," answer'd Hum,  
 "Your Majesty's in love with some fine girl  
 Named Bertha; but her surname will not come,  
 Without a little conjuring." "Tis Pearl,  
 'Tis Bertha Pearl that makes my brains so whirl;  
 And she is softer, fairer than her name!"  
 "Where does she live?" ask'd Hum. "Her fair locks curl  
 So brightly, they put all our fays to shame!—  
 Live?—O! at Canterbury, with her old grand-dame."

## XLIV

"Good! good!" cried Hum, "I've known her from a child!  
 She is a changeling of my management;  
 She was born at midnight in an Indian wild;  
 Her mother's screams with the striped tiger's blent,  
 While the torch-bearing slaves a halloo sent  
 Into the jungles; and her palanquin,  
 Rested amid the desert's dreariment,  
 Shook with her agony, till fair were seen  
 The little Bertha's eyes oped on the stars serene."

## XLV

"I can't say," said the monarch; "that may be  
 Just as it happen'd, true or else a bam!  
 Drink up your brandy, and sit down by me,  
 Feel, feel my pulse, how much in love I am;  
 And if your science is not all a sham,  
 Tell me some means to get the lady here."  
 "Upon my honour!" said the son of Cham,  
 "She is my dainty changeling, near and dear,  
 Although her story sounds at first a little queer."

## XLVI

"Convey her to me, Hum, or by my crown,  
 My sceptre, and my cross-surmounted globe,  
 I'll knock you"—"Does your majesty mean—*down?*  
 No, no, you never could my feelings probe  
 To such a depth!" The Emperor took his robe,  
 And went upon its purple palatine,  
 While Hum continued, shamming half a sob,—  
 "In Canterbury doth your lady shine?  
 But let me cool your brandy with a little wine."

## XLVII

Whereat a narrow Flemish glass he took,  
 That once belong'd to Admiral de Witt,  
 Admir'd it with a connoisseuring look,  
 And with the ripest claret crowned it,  
 And, ere one lively bead could burst and flit,  
 He turn'd it quickly, nimbly upside down,  
 His mouth being held conveniently fit  
 To catch the treasure: "Best in all the town!"  
 He said, smack'd his moist lips, and gave a pleasant frown.

## XLVIII

"Ah! good my Prince, weep not!" And then again  
 He fill'd a bumper. "Great Sire, do not weep!  
 Your pulse is shocking, but I'll ease your pain."  
 "Fetch me that Ottoman, and prithee keep  
 Your voice low," said the Emperor; "and steep  
 Some lady's-fingers nice in Candy wine;  
 And prithee, Hum, behind the screen do peep  
 For the rose-water vase, magician mine!  
 And sponge my forehead,—so my love doth make me pine.

## XLIX

"Ah, cursed Bellanaine!" "Don't think of her,"  
 Rejoin'd the Mago, "but on Bertha muse;  
 For, by my choicest best barometer,  
 You shall not throttled be in marriage noose;  
 I've said it, Sire; you only have to choose  
 Bertha or Bellanaine." So saying, he drew  
 From the left pocket of his threadbare hose,  
 A sampler hoarded slyly, good as new,  
 Holding it by his thumb and finger full in view.

## L

"Sire, this is Bertha Pearl's neat handy-work,  
 Her *name*, see here, *Midsummer, ninety-one*."  
 Elfinan snatch'd it with a sudden jerk,  
 And wept as if he never would have done,  
 Honouring with royal tears the poor homespun;  
 Whereon were broider'd tigers with black eyes,  
 And long-tail'd pheasants, and a rising sun,  
 Plenty of posies, great stags, butterflies  
 Bigger than stags,—a moon,—with other mysteries.

## LI

The monarch handled o'er and o'er again  
 These day-school hieroglyphics with a sigh;  
 Somewhat in sadness, but pleas'd in the main,  
 Till this oracular couplet met his eye  
 Astounded—*Cupid I, do thee defy!*  
 It was too much. He shrunk back in his chair,  
 Grew pale as death, and fainted—very nigh!  
 "Pho! nonsense!" exclaim'd Hum, "now don't despair;  
 She does not mean it really. Cheer up hearty there!

## LII

“And listen to my words. You say you won’t,  
 On any terms, marry Miss Bellanaine;  
 It goes against your conscience—good! Well, don’t.  
 You say you love a mortal. I would fain  
 Persuade your honour’s highness to refrain  
 From peccadilloes. But, Sire, as I say,  
 What good would that do? And, to be more plain,  
 You would do me a mischief some odd day,  
 Cut off my ears and hands, or head too, by my fay!

## LIII

“Besides, manners forbid that I should pass any  
 Vile strictures on the conduct of a prince  
 Who should indulge his genius, if he has any,  
 Not, like a subject, foolish matters mince.  
 Now I think on ’t, perhaps I could convince  
 Your Majesty there is no crime at all  
 In loving pretty little Bertha, since  
 She’s very delicate,—not over tall,—  
 A fairy’s hand, and in the waist, why—very small.”

## LIV

“Ring the repeater, gentle Hum!” “’Tis five,”  
 Said gentle Hum; “the nights draw in apace;  
 The little birds I hear are all alive;  
 I see the dawning touch’d upon your face;  
 Shall I put out the candles, please your Grace?”  
 “Do put them out, and, without more ado,  
 Tell me how I may that sweet girl embrace,—  
 How you can bring her to me.” “That’s for you,  
 Great Emperor! to adventure, like a lover true.”

## LV

“I fetch her!”—“Yes, an ’t like your Majesty;  
 And as she would be frighten’d wide awake  
 To travel such a distance through the sky,  
 Use of some soft manœuvre you must make,  
 For your convenience, and her dear nerves’ sake;  
 Nice way would be to bring her in a swoon,  
 Anon, I’ll tell what course were best to take;  
 You must away this morning.” “Hum! so soon?”  
 “Sire, you must be in Kent by twelve o’clock at noon.”

## LVI

At this great Cæsar started on his feet,  
 Lifted his wings and stood attentive-wise.  
 "Those wings to Canterbury you must beat,  
 If you hold Bertha as a worthy prize.  
 Look in the Almanack—*Moore* never lies—  
 April the twenty-fourth—this coming day,  
 Now breathing its new bloom upon the skies,  
 Will end in St. Mark's Eve;—you must away,  
 For on that eve alone can you the maid convey."

## LVII

Then the magician solemnly 'gan frown,  
 So that his frost-white eyebrows, beetling low,  
 Shaded his deep-green eyes, and wrinkles brown  
 Plaited upon his furnace-scorched brow:  
 Forth from the hood that hung his neck below,  
 He lifted a bright casket of pure gold,  
 Touch'd a spring-lock, and there in wool, or snow  
 Charm'd into ever-freezing, lay an old  
 And legend-leaved book, mysterious to behold.

## LVIII

"Take this same book,—it will not bite you, Sire;  
 There, put it underneath your royal arm;  
 Though it's a pretty weight it will not tire,  
 But rather on your journey keep you warm:  
 This is the magic, this the potent charm,  
 That shall drive Bertha to a fainting fit!  
 When the time comes, don't feel the least alarm,  
 Uplift her from the ground, and swiftly flit  
 Back to your palace, where I wait for guerdon fit."

## LIX

"What shall I do with this same book?" "Why merely  
 Lay it on Bertha's table, close beside  
 Her work-box, and 'twill help your purpose dearly;  
 I say no more." "Or good or ill betide,  
 Through the wide air to Kent this morn I glide!"  
 Exclaim'd the Emperor. "When I return,  
 Ask what you will,—I'll give you my new bride!  
 And take some more wine, Hum;—O Heavens! I burn  
 To be upon the wing! Now, now, that minx I spurn!"

## LX

"Leave her to me," rejoin'd the magian:  
 "But how shall I account, illustrious fay!  
 For thine imperial absence? Pho! I can  
 Say you are very sick, and bar the way  
 To your so loving courtiers for one day;  
 If either of their two archbishops' graces  
 Should talk of extreme unction, I shall say  
 You do not like cold pig with Latin phrases,  
 Which never should be used but in alarming cases."

## LXI

"Open the window, Hum; I'm ready now!"  
 "Zooks!" exclaim'd Hum, as up the sash he drew,  
 "Behold, your Majesty, upon the brow  
 Of yonder hill, what crowds of people!" "Whew!  
 The monster's always after something new,"  
 Return'd his Highness, "they are piping hot  
 To see my pigsny Bellanaine. Hum! do  
 Tighten my belt a little,—so, so,—not  
 Too tight,—the book!—my wand!—so, nothing is forgot."

## LXII

"Wounds! how they shout!" said Hum, "and there,—see, see  
 The Ambassadors return'd from Pigmio!  
 The morning's very fine,—uncommonly!  
 See, past the skirts of yon white cloud they go,  
 Tinging it with soft crimsons! Now below  
 The sable-pointed heads of firs and pines  
 They dip, move on, and with them moves a glow  
 Along the forest side! Now amber lines  
 Reach the hill top, and now throughout the valley shines."

## LXIII

"Why, Hum, you're getting quite poetical!  
 Those *nows* you managed in a special style."  
 "If ever you have leisure, Sire, you shall  
 See scraps of mine will make it worth your while,  
 Tit-bits for Phœbus!—yes, you well may smile.  
 Hark! Hah! the bells!" "A little further yet,  
 Good Hum, and let me view this mighty coil."  
 Then the great Emperor full graceful set  
 His elbow for a prop, and snuff'd his mignonnette.

## LXIV

The morn is full of holiday; loud bells  
With rival clamours ring from every spire;  
Cunningly-station'd music dies and swells  
In echoing places; when the winds respire,  
Light flags stream out like gauzy tongues of fire;  
A metropolitan murmur, lifeful, warm,  
Comes from the northern suburbs; rich attire  
Freckles with red and gold the moving swarm;  
While here and there clear trumpets blow a keen alarm.

## LXV

And now the fairy escort was seen clear,  
Like the old pageant of Aurora's train,  
Above a pearl-built minster, hovering near;  
First wily Crafticant, the chamberlain,  
Balanc'd upon his grey-grown pinions twain,  
His slender wand officially reveal'd;  
Then black gnomes scattering sixpences like rain;  
Then pages three and three; and next, slave-held,  
The Imaian 'scutcheon bright,—one mouse in argent field.

## LXVI

Gentlemen pensioners next; and after them,  
A troop of winged Janizaries flew;  
Then Slaves, as presents bearing many a gem;  
Then twelve physicians fluttering two and two;  
And next a chaplain in a cassock new;  
Then Lords in waiting; then (what head not reels  
For pleasure?)—the fair Princess in full view,  
Borne upon wings,—and very pleas'd she feels  
To have such splendour dance attendance at her heels.

## LXVII

For there was more magnificence behind:  
She wav'd her handkerchief. "Ah, very grand!"  
Cried Elfinan, and clos'd the window-blind;  
"And, Hum, we must not shilly-shally stand,—  
Adieu! adieu! I'm off for Angle-land!  
I say, old Hocus, have you such a thing  
About you,—feel your pockets, I command,—  
I want, this instant, an invisible ring,—  
Thank you, old mummy!—now securely I take wing."

## LXVIII

Then Elfinan swift vaulted from the floor,  
 And lighted graceful on the window-sill;  
 Under one arm the magic book he bore,  
 The other he could wave about at will;  
 Pale was his face, he still look'd very ill:  
 He bow'd at Bellanaine, and said—"Poor Bell!  
 Farewell! farewell! and if for ever! still  
 For ever fare thee well!"—and then he fell  
 A laughing!—snapp'd his fingers!—shame it is to tell!

## LXIX

"By'r Lady! he is gone!" cries Hum, "and I—  
 (I own it)—have made too free with his wine;  
 Old Crafticant will smoke me. By the bye—  
 This room is full of jewels as a mine,—  
 Dear valuable creatures, how ye shine!  
 Sometime to-day I must contrive a minute,  
 If Mercury propitiously incline,  
 To examine his scrutoire, and see what's in it,  
 For of superfluous diamonds I as well may thin it.

## LXX

"The Emperor's horrid bad; yes, that's my cue!"  
 Some histories say that this was Hum's last speech;  
 That, being fuddled, he went reeling through  
 The corridor, and scarce upright could reach  
 The stair-head; that being gluttled as a leech,  
 And us'd, as we ourselves have just now said,  
 To manage stairs reversely, like a peach  
 Too ripe, he fell, being puzzled in his head  
 With liquor and the staircase: verdict—*found stone dead.*

## LXXI

This as a falsehood Crafticanto treats;  
 And as his style is of strange elegance,  
 Gentle and tender, full of soft conceits,  
 (Much like our Boswell's,) we will take a glance  
 At his sweet prose, and, if we can, make dance  
 His woven periods into careless rhyme;  
 O, little faery Pegasus! rear—prance—  
 Trot round the quarto—ordinary time!  
 March, little Pegasus, with pawing hoof sublime!



## LXXII

Well, let us see,—*tenth book and chapter nine*,—  
Thus Crafticant pursues his diary:—  
“ ’Twas twelve o’clock at night, the weather fine,  
Latitude thirty-six; our scouts descry  
A flight of starlings making rapidly  
Towards Thibet. Mem.:—birds fly in the night;  
From twelve to half-past—wings not fit to fly  
For a thick fog—the Princess sulky quite  
Call’d for an extra shawl, and gave her nurse a bite.

## LXXIII

“Five minutes before one—brought down a moth  
With my new double-barrel—stew’d the thighs  
And made a very tolerable broth—  
Princess turn’d dainty;—to our great surprise,  
Alter’d her mind, and thought it very nice:  
Seeing her pleasant, tried her with a pun,  
She frown’d; a monstrous owl across us flies  
About this time,—a sad old figure of fun;  
Bad omen—this new match can’t be a happy one.

## LXXIV

“From two till half-past, dusky way we made,  
Above the plains of Gobi,—desert, bleak;  
Beheld afar off, in the hooded shade  
Of darkness, a great mountain (strange to speak),  
Spitting, from forth its sulphur-baken peak,  
A fan-shap’d burst of blood-red, arrowy fire,  
Turban’d with smoke, which still away did reek,  
Solid and black from that eternal pyre,  
Upon the laden wind that scantily could respire.

## LXXV

“Just upon three o’clock a falling star  
Created an alarm among our troop,  
Kill’d a man-cook, a page, and broke a jar,  
A tureen, and three dishes, at one swoop,  
Then passing by the Princess, singed her hoop:  
Could not conceive what Coralline was at,  
She clapp’d her hands three times and cried out ‘Whoop!’  
Some strange Imaian custom. A large bat  
Came sudden ’fore my face, and brush’d against my hat.

## LXXVI

“Five minutes thirteen seconds after three,  
 Far in the west a mighty fire broke out,  
 Conjectur’d, on the instant, it might be  
 The city of Balk—’twas Balk beyond all doubt:  
 A Griffin, wheeling here and there about,  
 Kept reconnoitring us—doubled our guard—  
 Lighted our torches, and kept up a shout,  
 Till he sheer’d off—the Princess very scar’d—  
 And many on their marrow-bones for death prepar’d.

## LXXVII

“At half-past three arose the cheerful moon—  
 Bivouack’d for four minutes on a cloud—  
 Where from the earth we heard a lively tune  
 Of tambourines and pipes, serene and loud,  
 While on a flowery lawn a brilliant crowd  
 Cinque-parted danc’d, some half asleep reposed  
 Beneath the green-fan’d cedars, some did shroud  
 In silken tents, and ’mid light fragrance dozed,  
 Or on the open turf their soothed eyelids closed.

## LXXVIII

“Dropp’d my gold watch, and kill’d a kettledrum—  
 It went for apoplexy—foolish folks!—  
 Left it to pay the piper—a good sum—  
 (I’ve got a conscience, maugre people’s jokes;)  
 To scrape a little favour ’gan to coax  
 Her Highness’ pug-dog—got a sharp rebuff—  
 She wish’d a game at whist—made three revokes—  
 Turn’d from myself, her partner, in a huff;  
 His majesty will know her temper time enough.

## LXXIX

“She cried for chess—I play’d a game with her—  
 Castled her king with such a vixen look,  
 It bodes ill to his Majesty—(refer  
 To the second chapter of my fortieth book,  
 And see what hoity-toity airs she took).  
 At half-past four the morn essay’d to beam—  
 Saluted, as we pass’d, an early rook—  
 The Princess fell asleep, and, in her dream,  
 Talk’d of one Master Hubert, deep in her esteem.

## LXXX

“About this time,—making delightful way,—  
Shed a quill-feather from my larboard wing—  
Wish’d, trusted, hop’d ’twas no sign of decay—  
Thank heaven, I’m hearty yet!—’twas no such thing:—  
At five the golden light began to spring,  
With fiery shudder through the bloomed east;  
At six we heard Panthea’s churches ring—  
The city all her unhiv’d swarms had cast,  
To watch our grand approach, and hail us as we pass’d.

## LXXXI

“As flowers turn their faces to the sun,  
So on our flight with hungry eyes they gaze,  
And, as we shap’d our course, this, that way run,  
With mad-cap pleasure, or hand-clasp’d amaze;  
Sweet in the air a mild-ton’d music plays,  
And progresses through its own labyrinth;  
Buds gather’d from the green spring’s middle-days,  
They scatter’d,—daisy, primrose, hyacinth,—  
Or round white columns wreath’d from capital to plinth.

## LXXXII

“Onward we floated o’er the panting streets,  
That seem’d throughout with upheld faces paved;  
Look where we will, our bird’s-eye vision meets  
Legions of holiday; bright standards waved,  
And fluttering ensigns emulously craved  
Our minute’s glance; a busy thunderous roar,  
From square to square, among the buildings raved,  
As when the sea, at flow, gluts up once more  
The craggy hollowness of a wild reefed shore.

## LXXXIII

“And ‘Bellanaine for ever!’ shouted they,  
While that fair Princess, from her winged chair,  
Bow’d low with high demeanour, and, to pay  
Their new-blown loyalty with guerdon fair,  
Still emptied, at meet distance, here and there,  
A plenty horn of jewels. And here I  
(Who wish to give the devil her due) declare  
Against that ugly piece of calumny,  
Which calls them Highland pebble-stones not worth a fly.

## LXXXIV

"Still 'Bellanaine!' they shouted, while we glide  
 'Slant to a light Ionic portico,  
 The city's delicacy, and the pride  
 Of our Imperial Basilic; a row  
 Of lords and ladies, on each hand, make show  
 Submissive of knee-bent obeisance,  
 All down the steps; and, as we enter'd, lo!  
 The strangest sight—the most unlook'd-for chance—  
 All things turn'd topsy-turvy in a devil's dance.

## LXXXV

"'Stead of his anxious Majesty and court  
 At the open doors, with wide saluting eyes,  
*Congées* and scape-graces of every sort,  
 And all the smooth routine of gallantries,  
 Was seen, to our immoderate surprise,  
 A motley crowd thick gather'd in the hall,  
 Lords, scullions, deputy-sculions, with wild cries  
 Stunning the vestibule from wall to wall,  
 Where the Chief Justice on his knees and hands doth crawl.

## LXXXVI

"Counts of the palace, and the state purveyor  
 Of moth's-down, to make soft the royal beds,  
 The Common Council and my fool Lord Mayor  
 Marching a-row, each other slipshod treads;  
 Powder'd bag-wigs and ruffy-tuffy heads  
 Of cinder wenches meet and soil each other;  
 Toe crush'd with heel ill-natur'd fighting breeds,  
 Frill-rumpling elbows brew up many a bother,  
 And fists in the short ribs keep up the yell and pother.

## LXXXVII

"A Poet, mounted on the Court-Clown's back,  
 Rode to the Princess swift with spurring heels,  
 And close into her face, with rhyming clack,  
 Began a Prothalamion;—she reels,  
 She falls, she faints! while laughter peals  
 Over her woman's weakness. 'Where!' cried I,  
 'Where is his Majesty?' No person feels  
 Inclined to answer; wherefore instantly  
 I plung'd into the crowd to find him or to die.

## LXXXVIII

“Jostling my way I gain’d the stairs, and ran  
To the first landing, where, incredible!  
I met, far gone in liquor, that old man,  
That vile impostor Hum,——”

So far so well,—

For we have prov’d the Mago never fell  
Down stairs on Crafticanto’s evidence;  
And therefore duly shall proceed to tell,  
Plain in our own original mood and tense,  
The sequel of this day, though labour ’tis immense!

\*

\*

\*

\*

Lines supposed to have been addressed  
TO FANNY BRAWNE

THIS living hand, now warm and capable  
Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold  
And in the icy silence of the tomb,  
So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights  
That thou wouldst wish thine own heart dry of blood  
So in my veins red life might stream again,  
And thou be conscience-calm’d—see here it is—  
I hold it towards you.

## SONNET

*Written on a Blank Page in Shakespeare’s Poems,  
facing “A Lover’s Complaint”*

BRIGHT star, would I were stedfast as thou art—  
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like nature’s patient, sleepless Eremite,  
The moving waters at their priestlike task  
Of pure ablution round earth’s human shores,  
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask  
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—  
No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,  
Pillow’d upon my fair love’s ripening breast,  
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.



## INDEX OF TITLES

- Acrostic: Georgiana Augusta Keats, 251  
 Ailsa Rock, Sonnet to, 255  
 Apollo and the Graces, 283  
     Hymn to, 224  
     Ode to, 221  
 Autumn, To, 193
- 'Bards of Passion and of Mirth,' 190  
 Ben Nevis: a Dialogue, 260  
     Sonnet written upon the top of, 260  
 Blue, Sonnet on the colour, 240  
 Brawne, Fanny: *see* Fanny  
 Brown, Charles Armitage, Spenserian  
     Stanzas on, 276  
 Burns, On Visiting the Tomb of, 251  
 Burns's Cottage, Sonnet written in, 256  
 Burns's Country, Lines written in the  
     Highlands after a visit to, 256  
 Byron, Sonnet to, 220
- Calidore, A Fragment, 8  
 Cap and Bells, The, 367  
 Castle Builder, Fragments of the, 232  
 Cat, Sonnet to a, 235  
 Chapman's Homer, On first looking  
     into, 32  
 Chatterton, Dedication to, 45  
     Sonnet to, 221  
 Clarke, Epistle to Charles Cowden, 24
- Daisy's Song, 242  
 Dawlish Fair, 250  
 Death, On, 219  
 Devon Maid, The, 247  
 Draught of Sunshine, A, 238  
 Dream, A (after reading Dante's Episode  
     of Paulo and Francesca), 273
- Elgin Marbles, On seeing the, 227  
 Endymion, 47
- EPISTLES:  
     To Charles Cowden Clarke, 24  
     To George Felton Mathew, 19  
     To George Keats, 21, 263  
     To J. H. Reynolds, 248  
 Eve of St. Agnes, The, 172  
 Eve of Saint Mark, The, 265  
 Eve's Apple, Sharing, 237  
 Extempore, An, 273
- Faeries, Song of Four, 279  
 Faery Songs, 244  
 Fall of Hyperion, 351  
 Fame, Two Sonnets on, 282  
 Fancy, To, 188  
 Fanny [Brawne], Lines to, 348  
     Lines supposed to have been addressed  
     to, 389  
     Ode to, 268  
     Sonnet to, 349  
 Fill for me a brimming bowl, 219  
 'Floure and the Lefe,' Sonnet on the,  
     227  
 Folly's Song, 242
- Gadfly, The, 257  
 Galloway Song, A, 254  
 Grasshopper and Cricket, On the, 33  
 Grecian Urn, Ode on a, 185
- Haydon, In a letter to, 246, 247  
     Sonnets to, 32, 227  
 Homer, Chapman's, On first looking  
     into, 32  
 Homer, Sonnet to, 245  
 Hope, To, 15  
 Human Seasons, Sonnet on the, 241  
 Hunt, Leigh, Dedication to, x  
     Sonnet on receiving a Laurel Crown  
     from, 223  
     *Story of Rimini*, On his, 230  
     Written on the Day that Mr. Leigh  
     Hunt left Prison, 28  
 Hymn to Apollo, 224  
     To Neptune, 112  
     To Pan, 52  
 Hyperion, 196  
     Fall of, 357
- Imitation of Spenser, 17  
 'In a drear-nighted December,' 264  
 Indolence, Ode on, 271  
 Induction to a Poem, Specimen of, 6  
 Isabella, 157  
 'I stood tip-toe upon a little hill,' 1
- Keats, George, Epistles to, 21  
     Sonnet to, 28

- King Lear*, Sonnet on sitting down to  
read once again, 236  
King Stephen, 339  
Kosciusko, Sonnet to, 34
- La Belle Dame sans Merci, 277  
Ladies, To some, 11  
Lamia, 141  
Leander, On a Picture of, 228  
Lines ('Unfelt, unheard, unseen'), 229  
On the Mermaid Tavern, 191  
To Fanny, 348  
Written in the Highlands, 256
- Maia, Fragment of an Ode to, 250  
Mathew, George Felton, Epistle to, 19  
Meg Merrilies, 252  
Melancholy, Ode on, 194  
Mermaid Tavern, Lines on the, 191  
Milton's Hair, Lines on seeing a Lock  
of, 235  
Modern Love, 232
- Neptune, Hymn to, 112  
Nightingale, Ode to a, 183  
Nile, Sonnet to the, 239
- ODES:  
Apollo, To, 221  
Autumn, To, 193  
'Bards of Passion and of Mirth,' 190  
Fanny, To, 268  
Grecian Urn, On a, 185  
Indolence, On, 271  
Maia, To, 250  
Melancholy, On, 194  
Nightingale, To a, 183  
Psyche, To, 186  
On leaving some Friends at an early  
hour, 32  
On receiving a curious Shell, 12  
Opera, Extracts from an, 241  
Opposites, A Song of, 234  
Otho the Great, 287  
Oxford, On, 231
- Pan, Hymn to, 52  
Party of Lovers, A, 347  
Peace, Sonnet on, 220  
Picture of Leander, On a, 228  
Poet, The, 231  
Prophecy, A, 263  
Psyche, Ode to, 186
- Reynolds, J. H.  
Epistle to, 248  
Lines from a Letter to, 240  
Sonnets to, 240-1  
Robin Hood, 192  
Ronsard, Fragment of a Sonnet from,  
262
- St. Agnes, Eve of, 172  
Saint Mark, Eve of, 265  
Sea, On the, 230  
Shell, On receiving a curious, 12  
Sleep, To, 270  
Sleep and Poetry, 35  
Solitude, Sonnet to, 30
- SONNETS:  
About myself, 253  
'Ah! woe is me!', 244  
'Hush, hush! tread softly!', 270  
'I had a dove and the sweet dove  
died,' 271  
'In a drear-nighted December,' 264  
of Four Faeries, 279  
of Opposites, 234  
Shed no tear, 244  
'Spirit here that reignest!', 245  
'There was a naughty Boy,' 229  
'The stranger lighted from his steed,'  
243  
'The sun with his great eye,' 242  
'When wedding fiddles are a-playing,'  
242
- SONNETS:  
'After dark vapours,' 227  
Ailsa Rock, 255  
'As from the darkening gloom,' 225  
'Before he went to feed with owls,'  
226  
Blue, on the colour, 240  
'Bright star! would I were stedfast  
as thou art,' 389  
Brothers, To my, 30  
Burns, To, 251  
Byron, To, 220  
Cat, to a, 235  
Chapman's Homer, On, 32  
Chatterton, To, 221  
Dream, A, after reading Dante's Epi-  
sode of Paulo and Francesca, 273  
Elgin Marbles, On seeing the, 227  
Fame, On, 282  
Fanny, To, 349  
'Floure and the Lefe,' On the, 227  
Friend who sent me some Roses, To  
a, 29  
G. A. W., To, 30  
George, To my Brother, 21, 28  
Grasshopper and Cricket, On the, 33  
'Happy is England!', 34  
Haydon, To, 32  
Homer, of and to, 32, 245  
'How many bards,' 29  
Human Seasons, The, 241  
Hunt, Leigh, To and of, 3, 28,  
223, 230  
Keats, George, To, 28  
'Keen, fitful gusts,' 31



SONNETS (*cont.*):

- King Lear*, On sitting down to read  
once again, 236  
Kosciusko, To, 34  
'Last' Sonnet, 389  
Leander, On a Picture of, 228  
Leaving some Friends, On, 32  
Nile, To the, 239  
'Oh! how I love,' 225  
On hearing the Bag-pipe and seeing  
*The Stranger* played at Inverary,  
258  
On visiting the Tomb of Burns, 251  
'O that a week could be an age,' 240  
Peace, On, 220  
Picture of Leander, On a, 228  
Reynolds, To J. H., 240-1  
*Rimini, Story of*, On the, 230  
Ronsard, Fragment of Sonnet from,  
262  
Sea, On the, 230  
Sleep, To, 270  
Solitude, To, 30  
Sonnet, On the, 283  
Spenser, To, 221  
'The day is gone, and all its sweets  
are gone,' 347  
To \* \* \* \* \* ('Had I a man's fair  
form'), 28  
To a Lady ('Time's sea hath been five  
years'), 239  
To a Lady seen for a few moments  
at Vauxhall, 239  
To a Young Lady, 223  
To Charles Wells, 29  
'To one who has been long,' 31  
To the Ladies who saw me crowned,  
223  
What the Thrush said, 240  
'When I have fears that I may cease  
to be,' 237

SONNETS (*cont.*):

- 'Why did I laugh to-night?,' 273  
Written in answer to a Sonnet by  
J. H. Reynolds, 240  
Written in disgust of vulgar super-  
stition, 226  
Written in the Cottage where Burns  
was born, 256  
Written upon the top of Ben Nevis,  
260  
Sorrow, To, 118  
Specimen of an Induction to a Poem, 6  
Spenser, Imitation of, 17  
Sonnet to, 221  
Spenserian Stanzas, 265-276  
Staffa, 259  
Stanzas ('In a drear-nighted Decem-  
ber'), 264  
Superstition, Written in disgust of vul-  
gar, 226  
  
Teignmouth, 246  
To \* \* \* \* \* ('Hadst thou liv'd in days  
of old'), 14  
To ——— ('Think not of it, sweet one  
so'), 229  
Two or Three, 276  
  
Wells, Charles, To, 29  
What the Thrush said, 240  
'Woman! when I behold thee,' 18  
Women, Wine, and Snuff, 219  
Wylie, Georgiana Augusta (afterwards  
Mrs. George Keats): Acrostic on,  
251  
Lines to, 14  
Sonnet to, 30  
Stanzas to, 225  
  
'You say you love,' 284



# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

|                                                             | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| After dark vapours have oppress'd our plains . . . . .      | 227  |
| Ah! ken ye what I met the day . . . . .                     | 254  |
| Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight, . . . . .            | 277  |
| Ah! who can e'er forget so fair a being? . . . . .          | 18   |
| Ah! woe is me! poor silver-wing! . . . . .                  | 244  |
| All gentle folks who owe a grudge . . . . .                 | 257  |
| And what is love? It is a doll dress'd up . . . . .         | 232  |
| Another sword! And what if I could seize . . . . .          | 341  |
| As from the darkening gloom a silver dove . . . . .         | 225  |
| As Hermes once took to his feathers light, . . . . .        | 273  |
| As late I rambled in the happy fields, . . . . .            | 29   |
| Asleep! O sleep a little while, white pearl! . . . . .      | 243  |
| A thing of beauty is a joy for ever: . . . . .              | 47   |
| Bards of Passion and of Mirth, . . . . .                    | 190  |
| Before he went to feed with owls and bats . . . . .         | 226  |
| Blue! 'Tis the life of heaven,—the domain . . . . .         | 240  |
| Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art— . . . . .   | 380  |
| Byron! how sweetly sad thy melody! . . . . .                | 220  |
| Can death be sleep, when life is but a dream, . . . . .     | 219  |
| Cat! who hast pass'd thy grand climacteric, . . . . .       | 235  |
| Chief of organic numbers! . . . . .                         | 235  |
| Come hither all sweet maidens soberly, . . . . .            | 228  |
| Dear Reynolds! as last night I lay in bed, . . . . .        | 248  |
| Deep in the shady sadness of a vale . . . . .               | 196  |
| Ever let the fancy roam, . . . . .                          | 188  |
| Fair Isabel, poor simple Isabel! . . . . .                  | 157  |
| Fame, like a wayward Girl, will still be coy . . . . .      | 281  |
| Fanatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave . . . . .  | 353  |
| Fill for me a brimming bowl . . . . .                       | 219  |
| Four seasons fill the measure of the year; . . . . .        | 241  |
| Fresh morning gusts have blown away all fear . . . . .      | 223  |
| Full many a dreary hour have I past, . . . . .              | 21   |
| Give me a golden pen, and let me lean . . . . .             | 32   |
| Give me women, wine and snuff . . . . .                     | 219  |
| Give me your patience Sister while I frame . . . . .        | 251  |
| Gloicester, no more: I will behold that Boulogne: . . . . . | 343  |
| Glory and loveliness have pass'd away; . . . . .            | x    |
| God of the golden bow, . . . . .                            | 224  |
| Go no further; not a step more; thou art . . . . .          | 325  |
| Good Kosciusko, thy great name alone . . . . .              | 34   |
| Great spirits now on earth are sojourning; . . . . .        | 33   |
| Grievously are we tantaliz'd, one and all— . . . . .        | 330  |

|                                                            |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Had I a man's fair form, then might my sighs . . . . .     | 28  |
| Hadst thou liv'd in days of old, . . . . .                 | 14  |
| Happy, happy glowing fire! . . . . .                       | 279 |
| Happy is England! I could be content . . . . .             | 34  |
| Hast thou from the caves of Golconda, a gem . . . . .      | 12  |
| Haydon! forgive me that I cannot speak . . . . .           | 227 |
| Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid! . . . . .              | 255 |
| He is to weet a melancholy carle: . . . . .                | 276 |
| Hence Burgundy, Claret, and Port, . . . . .                | 238 |
| Here all the summer could I stay, . . . . .                | 246 |
| Highmindedness, a jealousy for good, . . . . .             | 32  |
| How fever'd is the man, who cannot look . . . . .          | 282 |
| How many bards gild the lapses of time! . . . . .          | 20  |
| Hush, hush! tread softly! hush, hush my dear! . . . . .    | 270 |
| I cry your mercy—pity—love!—aye, love! . . . . .           | 349 |
| If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd, . . . . .   | 283 |
| If shame can on a soldier's vein-swoll'n front . . . . .   | 339 |
| I had a dove and the sweet dove died; . . . . .            | 271 |
| In a drear-nighted December, . . . . .                     | 264 |
| In after-time, a sage of mickle lore . . . . .             | 265 |
| In midmost Ind, beside Hydaspes cool, . . . . .            | 307 |
| In short, convince you that however wise . . . . .         | 232 |
| In the wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch, . . . . .    | 106 |
| In thy western halls of gold . . . . .                     | 221 |
| I stood tip-toe upon a little hill, . . . . .              | 1   |
| It keeps eternal whisperings around . . . . .              | 230 |
| Just at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings . . . . .  | 204 |
| Keen, fitful gusts are whisp'ring here and there . . . . . | 31  |
| King of the stormy sea! . . . . .                          | 112 |
| Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair; . . . . .   | 18  |
| Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry; . . . . .              | 6   |
| Love in a hut, with water and a crust, . . . . .           | 150 |
| Many the wonders I this day have seen: . . . . .           | 28  |
| Minutes are flying swiftly, and as yet . . . . .           | 223 |
| Mortal, that thou may'st understand aright, . . . . .      | 303 |
| Mother of Hermes! and still youthful Maia! . . . . .       | 250 |
| Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold, . . . . .     | 32  |
| Muse of my native land! loftiest Muse! . . . . .           | 114 |
| My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains . . . . .      | 183 |
| My spirit is too weak—mortality . . . . .                  | 228 |
| Nature withheld Cassandra in the skies, . . . . .          | 262 |
| No more advices, no more cautioning: . . . . .             | 293 |
| No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist . . . . .           | 194 |
| Not Aladdin magian . . . . .                               | 259 |
| No! those days are gone away, . . . . .                    | 192 |
| Now, Ludolph! Now, Auranthe! Daughter fair! . . . . .      | 309 |
| Now may we lift our bruised vizors up, . . . . .           | 310 |
| Now Morning from her orient chamber came, . . . . .        | 17  |
| Nymph of the downward smile and sidelong glance, . . . . . | 30  |
| O Arethusa, peerless nymph! why fear . . . . .             | 89  |
| O blush not so! O blush not so! . . . . .                  | 237 |

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

39;

PAGE

|                                                                   |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| O Chatterton! how very sad thy fate! . . . . .                    | 221 |
| O come Georgiana! the rose is full blown, . . . . .               | 225 |
| Of late two dainties were before me plac'd . . . . .              | 258 |
| O for enough life to support me on . . . . .                      | 326 |
| Oft have you seen a swan superbly frowning, . . . . .             | 24  |
| O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung . . . . .           | 186 |
| O golden tongued Romance, with serene lute! . . . . .             | 236 |
| O, my poor Boy! my Son! my Son! my Ludolph! . . . . .             | 329 |
| Oh! how I love, on a fair summer's eve, . . . . .                 | 225 |
| Oh, I am frighten'd with most hateful thoughts! . . . . .         | 243 |
| Old Meg she was a Gipsy, . . . . .                                | 252 |
| One morn before me were three figures seen, . . . . .             | 271 |
| O Peace! and dost thou with thy presence bless . . . . .          | 220 |
| O soft embalmer of the still midnight, . . . . .                  | 270 |
| O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell, . . . . .                  | 30  |
| O Sorrow, . . . . .                                               | 118 |
| O sovereign power of love! O grief! O balm! . . . . .             | 69  |
| O that a week could be an age, and we . . . . .                   | 240 |
| O that the earth were empty, as when Cain . . . . .               | 307 |
| O thou whose face hath felt the Winter's wind, . . . . .          | 240 |
| O Thou, whose mighty palace roof doth hang . . . . .              | 52  |
| Over the Hill and over the Dale, . . . . .                        | 250 |
| O! were I one of the Olympian twelve, . . . . .                   | 241 |
| <br>Pensive they sit, and roll their languid eyes, . . . . .      | 347 |
| Physician Nature! let my spirit blood! . . . . .                  | 268 |
| <br>Read me a lesson, Muse, and speak it loud . . . . .           | 260 |
| <br>St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was! . . . . .             | 72  |
| Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, . . . . .                | 493 |
| Shed no tear—O shed no tear! . . . . .                            | 244 |
| Small, busy flames play through the fresh laid coals, . . . . .   | 30  |
| So, I am safe emerged from these broils! . . . . .                | 287 |
| Son of the old moon-mountains African! . . . . .                  | 239 |
| Souls of Poets dead and gone, . . . . .                           | 191 |
| Spenser! a jealous honourer of thine, . . . . .                   | 221 |
| Spirit here that reignest! . . . . .                              | 245 |
| Standing aloof in giant ignorance, . . . . .                      | 245 |
| Still very sick my Lord; but now I went . . . . .                 | 322 |
| Sweet are the pleasures that to verse belong, . . . . .           | 19  |
| <br>The church bells toll a melancholy round, . . . . .           | 226 |
| The day is gone, and all its sweets are gone! . . . . .           | 347 |
| The Gothic looks solemn, . . . . .                                | 231 |
| The poetry of earth is never dead: . . . . .                      | 33  |
| There are who lord it o'er their fellow-men . . . . .             | 91  |
| There is a charm in footing slow across a silent plain, . . . . . | 256 |
| There was a naughty Boy, . . . . .                                | 253 |
| The stranger lighted from his steed, . . . . .                    | 243 |
| The sun, with his great eye, . . . . .                            | 241 |
| The town, the churchyard, and the setting sun, . . . . .          | 251 |
| Think not of it, sweet one, so;— . . . . .                        | 229 |
| This living hand, now warm and capable . . . . .                  | 389 |
| This mortal body of a thousand days . . . . .                     | 256 |
| This pleasant tale is like a little copse: . . . . .              | 227 |
| Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness, . . . . .               | 185 |
| Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace, . . . . .                 | 214 |

|                                                              |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Time's sea hath been five years at its slow ebb, . . . . .   | 239 |
| 'Tis the witching hour of night, . . . . .                   | 203 |
| To one who has been long in city pent, . . . . .             | 31  |
| Two or three Posies . . . . .                                | 276 |
| Unfelt, unheard, unseen, . . . . .                           | 220 |
| Upon a Sabbath-day it fell; . . . . .                        | 265 |
| Upon a time, before the faery broods . . . . .               | 141 |
| Upon my life Sir Nevis I am pique'd . . . . .                | 260 |
| Was ever such a night? . . . . .                             | 328 |
| Welcome joy, and welcome sorrow, . . . . .                   | 234 |
| Well, well, I know what ugly jeopardy . . . . .              | 317 |
| What can I do to drive away . . . . .                        | 348 |
| What is more gentle than a wind in summer? . . . . .         | 35  |
| What is there in the universal Earth . . . . .               | 223 |
| What though, for showing truth to flatter'd state, . . . . . | 28  |
| What though while the wonders of nature exploring, . . . . . | 11  |
| When by my solitary hearth I sit, . . . . .                  | 15  |
| When I have fears that I may cease to be . . . . .           | 237 |
| When they were come into the Faery's Court . . . . .         | 273 |
| When wedding fiddles are a-playing, . . . . .                | 241 |
| Where be ye going, you Devon Maid? . . . . .                 | 247 |
| Where is my noble herald? . . . . .                          | 261 |
| Where's the Poet? show him! show him, . . . . .              | 231 |
| Where! where! where shall I find a messenger? . . . . .      | 303 |
| Which of the fairest three . . . . .                         | 283 |
| Who loves to peer up at the morning sun, . . . . .           | 230 |
| Who, who from Dian's feast would be away? . . . . .          | 127 |
| Why did I laugh to-night? No voice will tell: . . . . .      | 273 |
| Woman! when I behold thee flippant, vain, . . . . .          | 18  |
| You have my secret; let it not be breath'd. . . . .          | 296 |
| Young Calidore is paddling o'er the lake; . . . . .          | 8   |
| You say you love; but with a voice . . . . .                 | 284 |

THE COMPLETE  
POETICAL WORKS OF  
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY





## PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY

### TO FIRST COLLECTED EDITION, 1839

OBSTACLES have long existed to my presenting the public with a perfect edition of Shelley's Poems. These being at last happily removed, I hasten to fulfil an important duty,—that of giving the productions of a sublime genius to the world, with all the correctness possible, and of, at the same time, detailing the history of those productions, as they sprang, living and warm, from his heart and brain. I abstain from any remark on the occurrences of his private life, except inasmuch as the passions which they engendered inspired his poetry. This is not the time to relate the truth; and I should reject any colouring of the truth. No account of these events has ever been given at all approaching reality in their details, either as regards himself or others; nor shall I further allude to them than to remark that the errors of action committed by a man as noble and generous as Shelley, may, as far as he only is concerned, be fearlessly avowed by those who loved him, in the firm conviction that, were they judged impartially, his character would stand in fairer and brighter light than that of any contemporary. Whatever faults he had ought to find extenuation among his fellows, since they prove him to be human; without them, the exalted nature of his soul would have raised him into something divine.

The qualities that struck any one newly introduced to Shelley were,—First, a gentle and cordial goodness that animated his intercourse with warm affection and helpful sympathy. The other, the eagerness and ardour with which he was attached to the cause of human happiness and improvement; and the fervent eloquence with which he discussed such subjects. His conversation was marked by its happy abundance, and the beautiful language in which he clothed his poetic ideas and philosophical notions. To defecate life of its misery and its evil was the ruling passion of his soul; he dedicated to it every power of his mind, every pulsation of his heart. He looked on political freedom as the direct agent to effect the happiness of mankind; and thus any new-sprung hope of liberty inspired a joy and an exultation more intense and wild than he could have felt for any personal advantage. Those who have never experienced the workings of passion on general and unselfish subjects cannot understand this; and it must be difficult of comprehension to the younger generation rising around, since they cannot remember the scorn and hatred with which the partisans of reform were regarded some few years ago, nor the persecutions to which they were exposed. He had been from youth the victim of the state of feeling inspired by the reaction of the French Revolution; and believing firmly in the justice and excellence of his views, it cannot be wondered that a nature as sensitive, as impetuous, and as generous as his, should put its whole force into the attempt to alleviate for others the evils of those systems from which he had himself suffered. Many advantages

attended his birth; he spurned them all when balanced with what he considered his duties. He was generous to imprudence, devoted to heroism.

These characteristics breathe throughout his poetry. The struggle for human weal; the resolution firm to martyrdom; the impetuous pursuit, the glad triumph in good; the determination not to despair;—such were the features that marked those of his works which he regarded with most complacency, as sustained by a lofty subject and useful aim.

In addition to these, his poems may be divided into two classes,—the purely imaginative, and those which sprang from the emotions of his heart. Among the former may be classed the *Witch of Atlas*, *Adonais*, and his latest composition, left imperfect, the *Triumph of Life*. In the first of these particularly he gave the reins to his fancy, and luxuriated in every idea as it rose; in all there is that sense of mystery which formed an essential portion of his perception of life—a clinging to the subtler inner spirit, rather than to the outward form—a curious and metaphysical anatomy of human passion and perception.

The second class is, of course, the more popular, as appealing at once to emotions common to us all; some of these rest on the passion of love; others on grief and despondency; others on the sentiments inspired by natural objects. Shelley's conception of love was exalted, absorbing, allied to all that is purest and noblest in our nature, and warmed by earnest passion; such it appears when he gave it a voice in verse. Yet he was usually averse to expressing these feelings, except when highly idealized; and many of his more beautiful effusions he had cast aside unfinished, and they were never seen by me till after I had lost him. Others, as for instance *Rosalind and Helen* and *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*, I found among his papers by chance; and with some difficulty urged him to complete them. There are others, such as the *Ode to the Skylark* and *The Cloud*, which, in the opinion of many critics, bear a purer poetical stamp than any other of his productions. They were written as his mind prompted: listening to the carolling of the bird, aloft in the azure sky of Italy; or marking the cloud as it sped across the heavens, while he floated in his boat on the Thames.

No poet was ever warmed by a more genuine and unforced inspiration. His extreme sensibility gave the intensity of passion to his intellectual pursuits; and rendered his mind keenly alive to every perception of outward objects, as well as to his internal sensations. Such a gift is, among the sad vicissitudes of human life, the disappointments we meet, and the galling sense of our own mistakes and errors, fraught with pain; to escape from such, he delivered up his soul to poetry, and felt happy when he sheltered himself, from the influence of human sympathies, in the wildest regions of fancy. His imagination has been termed too brilliant, his thoughts too subtle. He loved to idealize reality; and this is a taste shared by few. We are willing to have our passing whims exalted into passions, for this gratifies our vanity; but few of us understand or sympathize with the endeavour to ally the love of abstract beauty, and adoration of abstract good, the *τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλόν* of the Socratic philosophers, with

our sympathies with our kind. In this, Shelley resembled Plato; both taking more delight in the abstract and the ideal than in the special and tangible. This did not result from imitation; for it was not till Shelley resided in Italy that he made Plato his study. He then translated his *Symposium* and his *Ion*; and the English language boasts of no more brilliant composition than Plato's Praise of Love translated by Shelley. To return to his own poetry. The luxury of imagination, which sought nothing beyond itself (as a child burdens itself with spring flowers, thinking of no use beyond the enjoyment of gathering them), often showed itself in his verses: they will be only appreciated by minds which have resemblance to his own; and the mystic subtlety of many of his thoughts will share the same fate. The metaphysical strain that characterizes much of what he has written was, indeed, the portion of his works to which, apart from those whose scope was to awaken mankind to aspirations for what he considered the true and good, he was himself particularly attached. There is much, however, that speaks to the many. When he would consent to dismiss these huntings after the obscure (which, entwined with his nature as they were, he did with difficulty), no poet ever expressed in sweeter, more heart-reaching, or more passionate verse, the gentler or more forcible emotions of the soul.

A wise friend once wrote to Shelley: 'You are still very young, and in certain essential respects you do not yet sufficiently perceive that you are so.' It is seldom that the young know what youth is, till they have got beyond its period; and time was not given him to attain this knowledge. It must be remembered that there is the stamp of such inexperience on all he wrote; he had not completed his nine-and-twentieth year when he died. The calm of middle life did not add the seal of the virtues which adorn maturity to those generated by the vehement spirit of youth. Through life also he was a martyr to ill-health, and constant pain wound up his nerves to a pitch of susceptibility that rendered his views of life different from those of a man in the enjoyment of healthy sensations. Perfectly gentle and forbearing in manner, he suffered a good deal of internal irritability, or rather excitement, and his fortitude to bear was almost always on the stretch; and thus, during a short life, he had gone through more experience of sensation than many whose existence is protracted. 'If I die to-morrow,' he said, on the eve of his unanticipated death, 'I have lived to be older than my father.' The weight of thought and feeling burdened him heavily; you read his sufferings in his attenuated frame, while you perceived the mastery he held over them in his animated countenance and brilliant eyes.

He died, and the world showed no outward sign. But his influence over mankind, though slow in growth, is fast augmenting; and, in the ameliorations that have taken place in the political state of his country, we may trace in part the operation of his arduous struggles. His spirit gathers peace in its new state from the sense that, though late, his exertions were not made in vain, and in the progress of the liberty he so fondly loved.

He died, and his place, among those who knew him intimately, has

never been filled up. He walked beside them like a spirit of good to comfort and benefit—to enlighten the darkness of life with irradiations of genius, to cheer it with his sympathy and love. Any one, once attached to Shelley, must feel all other affections, however true and fond, as wasted on barren soil in comparison. It is our best consolation to know that such a pure-minded and exalted being was once among us, and now exists where we hope one day to join him;—although the intolerant, in their blindness, poured down anathemas, the Spirit of Good, who can judge the heart, never rejected him.

In the notes appended to the poems I have endeavoured to narrate the origin and history of each. The loss of nearly all letters and papers which refer to his early life renders the execution more imperfect than it would otherwise have been. I have, however, the liveliest recollection of all that was done and said during the period of my knowing him. Every impression is as clear as if stamped yesterday, and I have no apprehension of any mistake in my statements as far as they go. In other respects I am indeed incompetent: but I feel the importance of the task, and regard it as my most sacred duty. I endeavour to fulfil it in a manner he would himself approve; and hope, in this publication, to lay the first stone of a monument due to Shelley's genius, his sufferings, and his virtues:

Se al seguir son tarda,  
Forse avverrà che 'l bel nome gentile  
Consacrerò con questa stanca penna.

#### POSTSCRIPT IN SECOND EDITION OF 1839

IN revising this new edition, and carefully consulting Shelley's scattered and confused papers, I found a few fragments which had hitherto escaped me, and was enabled to complete a few poems hitherto left unfinished. What at one time escapes the searching eye, dimmed by its own earnestness, becomes clear at a future period. By the aid of a friend, I also present some poems complete and correct which hitherto have been defaced by various mistakes and omissions. It was suggested that the poem *To the Queen of my Heart* was falsely attributed to Shelley. I certainly find no trace of it among his papers; and, as those of his intimate friends whom I have consulted never heard of it, I omit it.

Two poems are added of some length, *Swellfoot the Tyrant* and *Peter Bell the Third*. I have mentioned the circumstances under which they were written in the notes; and need only add that they are conceived in a very different spirit from Shelley's usual compositions. They are specimens of the burlesque and fanciful; but, although they adopt a familiar style and homely imagery, there shine through the radiance of the poet's imagination the earnest views and opinions of the politician and the moralist.

At my request the publisher has restored the omitted passages of *Queen Mab*. I now present this edition as a complete collection of my husband's poetical works, and I do not foresee that I can hereafter add to or take away a word or line.

PUTNEY. November 6. 1830.

PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY  
TO THE VOLUME OF POSTHUMOUS POEMS

PUBLISHED IN 1824

In nobil sangue vita umile e queta,  
Ed in alto intelletto un puro core;  
Frutto senile in sul giovenil fiore,  
E in aspetto pensoso anima lieta.—PETRARCA.

It had been my wish, on presenting the public with the Posthumous Poems of Mr. Shelley, to have accompanied them by a biographical notice; as it appeared to me that at this moment a narration of the events of my husband's life would come more gracefully from other hands than mine, I applied to Mr. Leigh Hunt. The distinguished friendship that Mr. Shelley felt for him, and the enthusiastic affection with which Mr. Leigh Hunt clings to his friend's memory, seemed to point him out as the person best calculated for such an undertaking. His absence from this country, which prevented our mutual explanation, has unfortunately rendered my scheme abortive. I do not doubt but that on some other occasion he will pay this tribute to his lost friend, and sincerely regret that the volume which I edit has not been honoured by its insertion.

The comparative solitude in which Mr. Shelley lived was the occasion that he was personally known to few; and his fearless enthusiasm in the cause which he considered the most sacred upon earth, the improvement of the moral and physical state of mankind, was the chief reason why he, like other illustrious reformers, was pursued by hatred and calumny. No man was ever more devoted than he to the endeavour of making those around him happy; no man ever possessed friends more unfeignedly attached to him. The ungrateful world did not feel his loss, and the gap it made seemed to close as quickly over his memory as the murderous sea above his living frame. Hereafter men will lament that his transcendent powers of intellect were extinguished before they had bestowed on them their choicest treasures. To his friends his loss is irremediable: the wise, the brave, the gentle, is gone for ever! He is to them as a bright vision, whose radiant track, left behind in the memory, is worth all the realities that society can afford. Before the critics contradict me, let them appeal to any one who had ever known him. To see him was to love him: and his presence, like Ithuriel's spear, was alone sufficient to disclose the falsehood of the tale which his enemies whispered in the ear of the ignorant world.

His life was spent in the contemplation of Nature, in arduous study, or in acts of kindness and affection. He was an elegant scholar and a profound metaphysician; without possessing much scientific knowledge, he was unrivalled in the justness and extent of his observations on natural objects; he knew every plant by its name, and was familiar with the history and habits of every production of the earth; he could interpret

without a fault each appearance in the sky; and the varied phenomena of heaven and earth filled him with deep emotion. He made his study and reading-room of the shadowed copse, the stream, the lake, and the waterfall. Ill health and continual pain preyed upon his powers; and the solitude in which we lived, particularly on our first arrival in Italy, although congenial to his feelings, must frequently have weighed upon his spirits; those beautiful and affecting *Lines written in Dejection near Naples* were composed at such an interval; but, when in health, his spirits were buoyant and youthful to an extraordinary degree.

Such was his love for Nature that every page of his poetry is associated, in the minds of his friends, with the loveliest scenes of the countries which he inhabited. In early life he visited the most beautiful parts of this country and Ireland. Afterwards the Alps of Switzerland became his inspirers. *Prometheus Unbound* was written among the deserted and flower-grown ruins of Rome; and, when he made his home under the Pisan hills, their roofless recesses harboured him as he composed the *Witch of Atlas*, *Adonais*, and *Hellas*. In the wild but beautiful Bay of Spezzia, the winds and waves which he loved became his playmates. His days were chiefly spent on the water; the management of his boat, its alterations and improvements, were his principal occupation. At night, when the unclouded moon shone on the calm sea, he often went alone in his little shallop to the rocky caves that bordered it, and, sitting beneath their shelter, wrote the *Triumph of Life*, the last of his productions. The beauty but strangeness of this lonely place, the refined pleasure which he felt in the companionship of a few selected friends, our entire sequestration from the rest of the world, all contributed to render this period of his life one of continued enjoyment. I am convinced that the two months we passed there were the happiest which he had ever known: his health even rapidly improved, and he was never better than when I last saw him, full of spirits and joy, embark for Leghorn, that he might there welcome Leigh Hunt to Italy. I was to have accompanied him; but illness confined me to my room, and thus put the seal on my misfortune. His vessel bore out of sight with a favouring wind, and I remained awaiting his return by the breakers of that sea which was about to engulf him.

He spent a week at Pisa, employed in kind offices toward his friend, and enjoying with keen delight the renewal of their intercourse. He then embarked with Mr. Williams, the chosen and beloved sharer of his pleasures and of his fate, to return to us. We waited for them in vain; the sea by its restless moaning seemed to desire to inform us of what we would not learn:—but a veil may well be drawn over such misery. The real anguish of those moments transcended all the fictions that the most glowing imagination ever portrayed; our seclusion, the savage nature of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, and our immediate vicinity to the troubled sea, combined to imbue with strange horror our days of uncertainty. The truth was at last known,—a truth that made our loved and lovely Italy appear a tomb, its sky a pall. Every heart echoed the deep lament, and my only consolation was in the praise and earnest

love that each voice bestowed and each countenance demonstrated for him we had lost,—not, I fondly hope, for ever; his unearthly and elevated nature is a pledge of the continuation of his being, although in an altered form. Rome received his ashes; they are deposited beneath its weed-grown wall, and ‘the world’s sole monument’ is enriched by his remains.

I must add a few words concerning the contents of this volume. *Julian and Maddalo*, the *Witch of Atlas*, and most of the *Translations*, were written some years ago; and, with the exception of the *Cyclops*, and the Scenes from the *Magico Prodigioso*, may be considered as having received the author’s ultimate corrections. The *Triumph of Life* was his last work, and was left in so unfinished a state that I arranged it in its present form with great difficulty. All his poems which were scattered in periodical works are collected in this volume, and I have added a reprint of *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*: the difficulty with which a copy can be obtained is the cause of its republication. Many of the Miscellaneous Poems, written on the spur of the occasion, and never retouched, I found among his manuscript books, and have carefully copied. I have subjoined, whenever I have been able, the date of their composition.

I do not know whether the critics will reprehend the insertion of some of the most imperfect among them; but I frankly own that I have been more actuated by the fear lest any monument of his genius should escape me than the wish of presenting nothing but what was complete to the fastidious reader. I feel secure that the lovers of Shelley’s poetry (who know how, more than any poet of the present day, every line and word he wrote is instinct with peculiar beauty) will pardon and thank me: I consecrate this volume to them.

The size of this collection has prevented the insertion of any prose pieces. They will hereafter appear in a separate publication.

MARY W. SHELLEY

LONDON, June 1, 1824.





# CONTENTS

|                                                                    | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| MRS. SHELLEY'S PREFACE TO FIRST COLLECTED EDITION, 1839 . . .      | iii  |
| POSTSCRIPT IN SECOND EDITION OF 1839 . . . . .                     | vi   |
| MRS. SHELLEY'S PREFACE TO <i>Posthumous Poems</i> , 1824 . . . . . | vii  |
| ALASTOR; OR, THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE. (1815) . . . . .              | I    |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                     | 18   |
| THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD. A FRAGMENT. (1816)                        |      |
| Part I . . . . .                                                   | 19   |
| Part II . . . . .                                                  | 26   |
| <u>THE REVOLT OF ISLAM. A POEM IN TWELVE CANTOS. (1817)</u>        |      |
| Preface . . . . .                                                  | 33   |
| Dedication: To Mary — — — . . . . .                                | 39   |
| Canto I . . . . .                                                  | 43   |
| Canto II . . . . .                                                 | 58   |
| Canto III . . . . .                                                | 70   |
| Canto IV . . . . .                                                 | 79   |
| Canto V . . . . .                                                  | 87   |
| Canto VI . . . . .                                                 | 104  |
| Canto VII . . . . .                                                | 118  |
| Canto VIII . . . . .                                               | 128  |
| Canto IX . . . . .                                                 | 135  |
| Canto X . . . . .                                                  | 144  |
| Canto XI . . . . .                                                 | 156  |
| Canto XII . . . . .                                                | 163  |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley ✓ . . . . .                                   | 173  |
| PRINCE ATHANASE. A FRAGMENT. (1817) . . . . .                      | 176  |
| ROSALIND AND HELEN. A MODERN ECLOGUE. (1817) . . . . .             | 185  |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                     | 209  |
| JULIAN AND MADDALO. A CONVERSATION. (1818) . . . . .               | 209  |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                     | 224  |
| PROMETHEUS UNBOUND. A LYRICAL DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS. (1819).          |      |
| Preface . . . . .                                                  | 225  |
| Act I . . . . .                                                    | 228  |
| Act II . . . . .                                                   | 249  |
| Act III . . . . .                                                  | 266  |
| Act IV . . . . .                                                   | 278  |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                     | 293  |
| THE Cenci. A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS. (1819)                          |      |
| Dedication, to Leigh Hunt, Esq. . . . .                            | 298  |
| Preface . . . . .                                                  | 299  |
| Act I . . . . .                                                    | 303  |
| Act II . . . . .                                                   | 313  |
| Act III . . . . .                                                  | 322  |
| Act IV . . . . .                                                   | 334  |
| Act V . . . . .                                                    | 347  |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                     | 362  |
| THE MASK OF ANARCHY. (1819) . . . . .                              | 366  |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                     | 373  |

|                                                                                     | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| PETER BELL THE THIRD. (1819) . . . . .                                              | 374  |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                                      | 392  |
| OEDIPUS TYRANNUS; OR, SWELLFOOT THE TYRANT. A TRAGEDY IN TWO ACTS. (1819) . . . . . | 393  |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                                      | 415  |
| CHARLES THE FIRST. (1819) . . . . .                                                 | 416  |
| LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE. (1820) . . . . .                                          | 436  |
| THE WITCH OF ATLAS. (1820) . . . . .                                                | 443  |
| To Mary . . . . .                                                                   | 443  |
| The Witch of Atlas . . . . .                                                        | 444  |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                                      | 462  |
| EPIPSYCHIDION. (1821) . . . . .                                                     | 463  |
| Fragments connected with Epipsychidion . . . . .                                    | 477  |
| ADONAIS. AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS. (1821) . . . . .                      | 484  |
| Preface . . . . .                                                                   | 484  |
| Adonais . . . . .                                                                   | 485  |
| Cancelled Passages . . . . .                                                        | 499  |
| HELLAS. A LYRICAL DRAMA. (1821) . . . . .                                           | 500  |
| Preface . . . . .                                                                   | 500  |
| Prologue . . . . .                                                                  | 503  |
| Hellas . . . . .                                                                    | 507  |
| Shelley's Notes . . . . .                                                           | 534  |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                                      | 537  |
| FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED DRAMA. (1822) . . . . .                                  | 539  |
| THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE. (1822) . . . . .                                               | 545  |
| EARLY POEMS. (1814, 1815)                                                           |      |
| Stanza, written at Bracknell . . . . .                                              | 559  |
| Stanzas.—April, 1814 . . . . .                                                      | 559  |
| To Harriet . . . . .                                                                | 560  |
| To Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin . . . . .                                             | 561  |
| To —, 'Yet look on me' . . . . .                                                    | 561  |
| Mutability . . . . .                                                                | 562  |
| On Death . . . . .                                                                  | 562  |
| A Summer Evening Churchyard . . . . .                                               | 563  |
| To —, 'Oh! there are spirits of the air' . . . . .                                  | 564  |
| To Wordsworth . . . . .                                                             | 565  |
| Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte . . . . .                         | 565  |
| Lines: 'The cold earth slept below' . . . . .                                       | 566  |
| Note on the Early Poems, by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                  | 567  |
| POEMS WRITTEN IN 1816.                                                              |      |
| The Sunset . . . . .                                                                | 568  |
| Hymn to Intellectual Beauty . . . . .                                               | 569  |
| Mont Blanc . . . . .                                                                | 571  |
| Fragment: Home . . . . .                                                            | 574  |
| Fragment of a Ghost Story . . . . .                                                 | 575  |
| Note on Poems of 1816, by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                    | 575  |
| POEMS WRITTEN IN 1817.                                                              |      |
| Marianne's Dream . . . . .                                                          | 576  |
| To Constantia, Singing . . . . .                                                    | 579  |
| To Constantia . . . . .                                                             | 580  |
| Fragment: To One Singing . . . . .                                                  | 580  |

# CONTENTS

xiii

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1817 (*continued*)—

PAGE

|                                                                  |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| A Fragment: To Music . . . . .                                   | 580 |
| Another Fragment to Music . . . . .                              | 581 |
| 'Mighty Eagle' . . . . .                                         | 581 |
| To the Lord Chancellor . . . . .                                 | 581 |
| To William Shelley . . . . .                                     | 583 |
| From the Original Draft of the Poem to William Shelley . . . . . | 584 |
| On Fanny Godwin . . . . .                                        | 585 |
| Lines: 'That time is dead for ever' . . . . .                    | 585 |
| Death . . . . .                                                  | 585 |
| Otho . . . . .                                                   | 586 |
| Fragments supposed to be parts of Otho . . . . .                 | 586 |
| 'O that a Chariot of Cloud were mine' . . . . .                  | 587 |
| Fragments:                                                       |     |
| To a Friend released from Prison . . . . .                       | 587 |
| Satan broken loose . . . . .                                     | 587 |
| <i>Igniculus Desiderii</i> . . . . .                             | 588 |
| <i>Amor Aeternus</i> . . . . .                                   | 588 |
| Thoughts come and go in Solitude . . . . .                       | 588 |
| A Hate-Song . . . . .                                            | 588 |
| Lines to a Critic . . . . .                                      | 588 |
| Ozymandias . . . . .                                             | 589 |
| Note on Poems of 1817, by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                 | 589 |

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1818.

|                                                     |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| To the Nile . . . . .                               | 591 |
| Passage of the Apennines . . . . .                  | 591 |
| The Past . . . . .                                  | 591 |
| To Mary ——— . . . . .                               | 592 |
| On a Faded Violet . . . . .                         | 592 |
| Lines written among the Euganean Hills . . . . .    | 592 |
| Scene from 'Tasso' . . . . .                        | 597 |
| Song for 'Tasso' . . . . .                          | 598 |
| Invocation to Misery . . . . .                      | 598 |
| Stanzas written in Dejection, near Naples . . . . . | 600 |
| The Woodman and the Nightingale . . . . .           | 601 |
| Marenghi . . . . .                                  | 603 |
| Sonnet: 'Lift not the painted veil' . . . . .       | 608 |
| Fragments:                                          |     |
| To Byron . . . . .                                  | 608 |
| Apostrophe to Silence . . . . .                     | 608 |
| The Lake's Margin . . . . .                         | 608 |
| 'My head is wild with weeping' . . . . .            | 608 |
| The Vine-Shroud . . . . .                           | 609 |
| Note on Poems of 1818, by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .    | 609 |

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1819.

|                                                               |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Lines written during the Castlereagh Administration . . . . . | 610 |
| Song to the Men of England . . . . .                          | 611 |
| Similes for two Political Characters of 1819 . . . . .        | 612 |
| Fragment: To the People of England . . . . .                  | 612 |
| Fragment: 'What men gain fairly' . . . . .                    | 612 |
| A New National Anthem . . . . .                               | 613 |
| Sonnet: England in 1819 . . . . .                             | 613 |

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1819 (*continued*)—

PAGE

|                                                       |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| An Ode written October, 1819 . . . . .                | 614 |
| Cancelled Stanza . . . . .                            | 614 |
| Ode to Heaven . . . . .                               | 615 |
| Ode to the West Wind . . . . .                        | 616 |
| An Exhortation . . . . .                              | 618 |
| The Indian Serenade . . . . .                         | 618 |
| Cancelled Passage . . . . .                           | 610 |
| To Sophia [Miss Stacey] . . . . .                     | 619 |
| To William Shelley, I . . . . .                       | 620 |
| To William Shelley, II . . . . .                      | 620 |
| To Mary Shelley, I . . . . .                          | 620 |
| To Mary Shelley, II . . . . .                         | 620 |
| On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci . . . . .          | 621 |
| Love's Philosophy . . . . .                           | 622 |
| Fragment: 'Follow to the deep wood's weeds' . . . . . | 622 |
| The Birth of Pleasure . . . . .                       | 622 |
| Fragments:                                            |     |
| Love the Universe to-day . . . . .                    | 622 |
| 'A gentle story of two lovers young' . . . . .        | 623 |
| Love's Tender Atmosphere . . . . .                    | 623 |
| Wedded Souls . . . . .                                | 623 |
| 'Is it that in some brighter sphere' . . . . .        | 623 |
| Sufficient unto the day . . . . .                     | 623 |
| 'Ye gentle visitations of calm thought' . . . . .     | 624 |
| Music and Sweet Poetry . . . . .                      | 624 |
| The Sepulchre of Memory . . . . .                     | 624 |
| 'When a lover clasps his fairest' . . . . .           | 624 |
| 'Wake the serpent not' . . . . .                      | 624 |
| Rain . . . . .                                        | 625 |
| A Tale Untold . . . . .                               | 625 |
| To Italy . . . . .                                    | 625 |
| Wine of the Fairies . . . . .                         | 625 |
| A Roman's Chamber . . . . .                           | 625 |
| Rome and Nature . . . . .                             | 626 |
| Variation of the Song of the Moon . . . . .           | 626 |
| Cancelled Stanza of the Mask of Anarchy . . . . .     | 626 |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                        | 626 |

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1820.

|                                                     |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| The Sensitive Plant . . . . .                       | 627 |
| A Vision of the Sea . . . . .                       | 634 |
| The Cloud . . . . .                                 | 638 |
| To a Skylark . . . . .                              | 640 |
| Ode to Liberty . . . . .                            | 642 |
| To ——. 'I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden' . . . . . | 649 |
| Arethusa . . . . .                                  | 649 |
| Song of Proserpine . . . . .                        | 650 |
| Hymn of Apollo . . . . .                            | 650 |
| Hymn of Pan . . . . .                               | 652 |
| The Question . . . . .                              | 652 |
| The Two Spirits: An Allegory . . . . .              | 653 |
| Ode to Naples . . . . .                             | 655 |

# CONTENTS

xv

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1820 (*continued*)—

PAGE

|                                                       |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Autumn: A Dirge . . . . .                             | 659 |
| The Waning Moon . . . . .                             | 660 |
| To the Moon . . . . .                                 | 660 |
| Death . . . . .                                       | 660 |
| Liberty . . . . .                                     | 661 |
| Summer and Winter . . . . .                           | 661 |
| The Tower of Famine . . . . .                         | 662 |
| An Allegory . . . . .                                 | 662 |
| The World's Wanderers . . . . .                       | 663 |
| Sonnet: 'Ye hasten to the grave!' . . . . .           | 663 |
| Lines to a Reviewer . . . . .                         | 664 |
| Fragment of a Satire on Satire . . . . .              | 664 |
| Good-night . . . . .                                  | 665 |
| Buona Notte . . . . .                                 | 665 |
| Orpheus . . . . .                                     | 666 |
| Fiordispina . . . . .                                 | 669 |
| Time Long Past . . . . .                              | 671 |
| Fragments:                                            |     |
| The Deserts of Dim Sleep . . . . .                    | 671 |
| 'The viewless and invisible consequence' . . . . .    | 671 |
| A Serpent-face . . . . .                              | 671 |
| Death in Life . . . . .                               | 671 |
| 'Such hope, as is the sick despair of good' . . . . . | 671 |
| 'Alas! this is not what I thought life was' . . . . . | 672 |
| Milton's Spirit . . . . .                             | 672 |
| 'Unrisn splendour of the brightest sun' . . . . .     | 672 |
| <i>Pater Omnipotens</i> . . . . .                     | 672 |
| To the Mind of Man . . . . .                          | 672 |
| Note on Poems of 1820, by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .      | 673 |

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1821.

|                                                                      |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Dirge for the Year . . . . .                                         | 674 |
| To Night . . . . .                                                   | 675 |
| Time . . . . .                                                       | 675 |
| Lines: 'Far, far away' . . . . .                                     | 676 |
| From the Arabic: An Imitation . . . . .                              | 676 |
| To Emilia Viviani . . . . .                                          | 676 |
| The Fugitives . . . . .                                              | 677 |
| To —, 'Music, when soft voices die' . . . . .                        | 678 |
| Song: 'Rarely, rarely, comest thou' . . . . .                        | 678 |
| Mutability . . . . .                                                 | 679 |
| Lines written on hearing the News of the Death of Napoleon . . . . . | 679 |
| Sonnet: Political Greatness . . . . .                                | 680 |
| The Aziola . . . . .                                                 | 680 |
| A Lament . . . . .                                                   | 681 |
| Remembrance . . . . .                                                | 681 |
| To Edward Williams . . . . .                                         | 682 |
| To —, 'One word is too often profaned' . . . . .                     | 683 |
| To —, 'When passion's trance is overpast' . . . . .                  | 683 |
| A Bridal Song . . . . .                                              | 684 |
| Epithalamium . . . . .                                               | 684 |

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1821 (*continued*)—

PAGE

|                                                             |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Another Version of the Same . . . . .                       | 685 |
| Love, Hope, Desire, and Fear . . . . .                      | 685 |
| Fragments written for <i>Hellas</i> . . . . .               | 686 |
| Fragment: 'I would not be a king' . . . . .                 | 687 |
| Ginevra . . . . .                                           | 687 |
| Evening: Ponte al Mare, Pisa . . . . .                      | 692 |
| The Boat on the Serchio . . . . .                           | 693 |
| Music . . . . .                                             | 696 |
| Sonnet to Byron . . . . .                                   | 696 |
| Fragment on Keats . . . . .                                 | 697 |
| Fragment: 'Methought I was a billow in the crowd' . . . . . | 697 |
| To-morrow . . . . .                                         | 697 |
| Stanza: 'If I walk in Autumn's even' . . . . .              | 697 |
| Fragments:                                                  |     |
| A Wanderer . . . . .                                        | 697 |
| Life rounded with Sleep . . . . .                           | 698 |
| 'I faint, I perish with my love' . . . . .                  | 698 |
| The Lady of the South . . . . .                             | 698 |
| Zephyrus the Awakener . . . . .                             | 698 |
| Rain . . . . .                                              | 698 |
| 'When soft winds and sunny skies' . . . . .                 | 698 |
| 'And that I walk thus proudly crowned' . . . . .            | 698 |
| 'The rude wind is singing' . . . . .                        | 699 |
| 'Great Spirit' . . . . .                                    | 699 |
| 'O thou immortal deity' . . . . .                           | 699 |
| The False Laurel and the True . . . . .                     | 699 |
| May the Limner . . . . .                                    | 699 |
| Beauty's Halo . . . . .                                     | 699 |
| 'The death knell is ringing' . . . . .                      | 700 |
| 'I stood upon a heaven-cleaving turret' . . . . .           | 700 |
| Note on Poems of 1821, by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .            | 700 |

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1822.

|                                                    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| The Zucca . . . . .                                | 703 |
| The Magnetic Lady to her Patient . . . . .         | 705 |
| Lines: 'When the lamp is shattered' . . . . .      | 706 |
| To Jane: The Invitation . . . . .                  | 706 |
| To Jane: The Recollection . . . . .                | 707 |
| The Pine Forest of the Cascine near Pisa . . . . . | 709 |
| With a Guitar, to Jane . . . . .                   | 710 |
| To Jane: 'The keen stars were twinkling' . . . . . | 711 |
| A Dirge . . . . .                                  | 712 |
| Lines written in the Bay of Lerici . . . . .       | 712 |
| Lines: 'We meet not as we parted' . . . . .        | 713 |
| The Isle . . . . .                                 | 713 |
| Fragment: To the Moon . . . . .                    | 713 |
| Epitaph . . . . .                                  | 714 |
| Note on Poems of 1822, by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .   | 714 |

## TRANSLATIONS

|                                                               |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Hymn to Mercury. Translated from the Greek of Homer . . . . . | 719 |
| Homer's Hymn to Castor and Pollux . . . . .                   | 741 |

# CONTENTS

xvii

## TRANSLATIONS (*continued*)—

PAGE

|                                                                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Homer's Hymn to the Moon . . . . .                                                | 741 |
| Homer's Hymn to the Sun . . . . .                                                 | 742 |
| Homer's Hymn to the Earth: Mother of All . . . . .                                | 743 |
| Homer's Hymn to Minerva . . . . .                                                 | 743 |
| Homer's Hymn to Venus . . . . .                                                   | 744 |
| The Cyclops: A Satyric Drama. Translated from the Greek of Euripides . . . . .    | 745 |
| Epigrams:                                                                         |     |
| I. To Stella. From the Greek of Plato . . . . .                                   | 762 |
| II. Kissing Helena. From the Greek of Plato . . . . .                             | 763 |
| III. Spirit of Plato. From the Greek . . . . .                                    | 763 |
| IV. Circumstance. From the Greek . . . . .                                        | 763 |
| Fragment of the Elegy on the Death of Adonis. From the Greek of Bion . . . . .    | 763 |
| Fragment of the Elegy on the Death of Bion. From the Greek of Moschus . . . . .   | 764 |
| From the Greek of Moschus . . . . .                                               | 765 |
| Pan, Echo, and the Satyr. From the Greek of Moschus . . . . .                     | 765 |
| From Vergil's Tenth Eclogue . . . . .                                             | 765 |
| From Vergil's Fourth Georgic . . . . .                                            | 766 |
| Sonnet. From the Italian of Dante . . . . .                                       | 767 |
| The First Canzone of the <i>Convito</i> . From the Italian of Dante . . . . .     | 767 |
| Matilda gathering Flowers. From the <i>Purgatorio</i> of Dante . . . . .          | 769 |
| Fragment. Adapted from the <i>Vita Nuova</i> of Dante . . . . .                   | 770 |
| Ugolino. <i>Inferno</i> , xxxiii. 22-75 . . . . .                                 | 770 |
| Sonnet. From the Italian of Cavalcanti . . . . .                                  | 772 |
| Scenes from the <i>Magico Prodigioso</i> . From the Spanish of Calderon . . . . . | 772 |
| Stanzas from Calderon's <i>Cisma de Inglaterra</i> . . . . .                      | 789 |
| Scenes from the <i>Faust</i> of Goethe . . . . .                                  | 790 |

## JUVENILIA.

### QUEEN MAB. A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM.

|                                                                             |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| To Harriet ***** . . . . .                                                  | 804 |
| Queen Mab . . . . .                                                         | 805 |
| Note by Mrs. Shelley . . . . .                                              | 850 |
| Verses on a Cat . . . . .                                                   | 854 |
| Fragment: Omens . . . . .                                                   | 855 |
| Epitaphium [Latin Version of the Epitaph in Gray's <i>Elegy</i> ] . . . . . | 855 |
| In Horologium . . . . .                                                     | 855 |
| A Dialogue . . . . .                                                        | 855 |
| To the Moonbeam . . . . .                                                   | 856 |
| The Solitary . . . . .                                                      | 857 |
| To Death . . . . .                                                          | 857 |
| Love's Rose . . . . .                                                       | 858 |
| Eyes: a Fragment . . . . .                                                  | 858 |

### ORIGINAL POETRY BY VICTOR AND CAZIRE.

|                                                                                    |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| I. 'Here I sit with my paper, my pen and my ink' . . . . .                         | 858 |
| II. To Miss ——— [Harriet Grove] From Miss ——— ———<br>[Elizabeth Shelley] . . . . . | 860 |
| III. Song: 'Cold, cold is the blast' . . . . .                                     | 862 |
| IV. Song: 'Come [Harriet]! sweet is the hour' . . . . .                            | 863 |

|                                                                                                 |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| JUVENILIA ( <i>continued</i> )—                                                                 | PAGE |
| V. Song: Despair . . . . .                                                                      | 863  |
| VI. Song: Sorrow . . . . .                                                                      | 863  |
| VII. Song: Hope . . . . .                                                                       | 864  |
| VIII. Song: Translated from the Italian . . . . .                                               | 865  |
| IX. Song: Translated from the German . . . . .                                                  | 865  |
| X. The Irishman's Song . . . . .                                                                | 865  |
| XI. Song: 'Fierce roars the midnight storm' . . . . .                                           | 866  |
| XII. Song: To—— [Harriet] . . . . .                                                             | 866  |
| XIII. Song: To —— [Harriet] . . . . .                                                           | 866  |
| XIV. Saint Edmond's Eve . . . . .                                                               | 867  |
| XV. Revenge . . . . .                                                                           | 869  |
| XVI. Ghasta; or, The Avenging Demon . . . . .                                                   | 871  |
| XVII. Fragment; or, The Triumph of Conscience . . . . .                                         | 874  |
| POEMS FROM ST. IRVYNE; OR, THE ROSICRUCIAN.                                                     |      |
| I. Victoria . . . . .                                                                           | 875  |
| II. 'On the Dark Height of Jura' . . . . .                                                      | 875  |
| III. Sister Rosa. A Ballad . . . . .                                                            | 876  |
| IV. St. Irvyne's Tower . . . . .                                                                | 877  |
| V. Bereavement . . . . .                                                                        | 878  |
| VI. The Drowned Lover . . . . .                                                                 | 878  |
| POSTHUMOUS FRAGMENTS OF MARGARET NICHOLSON.                                                     |      |
| Advertisement . . . . .                                                                         | 870  |
| War . . . . .                                                                                   | 880  |
| Fragment: Supposed to be an Epithalamium of Francis<br>Ravaillac and Charlotte Corday . . . . . | 881  |
| Despair . . . . .                                                                               | 884  |
| Fragment . . . . .                                                                              | 885  |
| The Spectral Horseman . . . . .                                                                 | 885  |
| Melody to a Scene of Former Times . . . . .                                                     | 887  |
| Stanza from a Translation of the Marseillaise Hymn . . . . .                                    | 887  |
| Bigotry's Victim . . . . .                                                                      | 888  |
| On an Icicle that clung to the Grass of a Grave . . . . .                                       | 888  |
| Love . . . . .                                                                                  | 880  |
| On a Fête at Carlton House: Fragment . . . . .                                                  | 800  |
| To a Star . . . . .                                                                             | 890  |
| To Mary, who died in this opinion . . . . .                                                     | 890  |
| A Tale of Society as it is: From Facts, 1811 . . . . .                                          | 801  |
| To the Republicans of North America . . . . .                                                   | 802  |
| To Ireland . . . . .                                                                            | 893  |
| On Robert Emmet's Grave . . . . .                                                               | 894  |
| The Retrospect: Cwm Elan, 1812 . . . . .                                                        | 894  |
| Fragment of a Sonnet: To Harriet . . . . .                                                      | 896  |
| To Harriet . . . . .                                                                            | 896  |
| Sonnet: To a Balloon laden with Knowledge . . . . .                                             | 898  |
| Sonnet: On launching some Bottles filled with Knowledge into the<br>Bristol Channel . . . . .   | 898  |
| The Devil's Walk . . . . .                                                                      | 800  |
| Fragment of a Sonnet: Farewell to North Devon . . . . .                                         | 902  |
| On leaving London for Wales . . . . .                                                           | 902  |
| The Wandering Jew's Soliloquy . . . . .                                                         | 903  |



# CONTENTS

xix

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| JUVENILIA ( <i>continued</i> )—           | PAGE |
| Evening: To Harriet . . . . .             | 904  |
| To Ianthe . . . . .                       | 904  |
| Song from the Wandering Jew . . . . .     | 904  |
| Fragment from the Wandering Jew . . . . . | 904  |
| To the Queen of my Heart . . . . .        | 905  |
| INDEX OF FIRST LINES . . . . .            | 907  |



# ALASTOR

OR

## THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

### PREFACE

THE poem entitled *Alastor* may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous, and tranquil, and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave.

The picture is not barren of instruction to actual men. The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin. But that Power which strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction, by awakening them to too exquisite a perception of its influences, dooms to a slow and poisonous decay those meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion. Their destiny is more abject and inglorious as their delinquency is more contemptible and pernicious. They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing

neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country. Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind, and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.

"The good die first,  
And those whose hearts are dry as summer dust,  
Burn to the socket!"

*December 14, 1815.*

Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare  
*The Confessions of St. Augustine.*

EARTH, ocean, air, beloved brotherhood!  
If our great Mother has imbued my soul  
With aught of natural piety to feel  
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine; 5  
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,  
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,  
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;  
If autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,  
And winter robing with pure snow and crowns 10  
Of starry ice the grey grass and bare boughs;  
If spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes  
Her first sweet kisses, have been dear to me;  
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast  
I consciously have injured, but still loved  
And cherished these my kindred; then forgive 15  
This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw  
No portion of your wonted favour now!

Mother of this unfathomable world!  
Favour my solemn song, for I have loved  
Thee ever, and thee only; I have watched 20  
Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,  
And my heart ever gazes on the depth  
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed  
In charnels and on coffins, where black death  
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee, 25  
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings  
Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost

Thy messenger, to render up the tale  
 Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,  
 When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,  
 Like an inspired and desperate alchymist 31  
 Staking his very life on some dark hope,  
 Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks  
 With my most innocent love, until strange tears  
 Uniting with those breathless kisses, made 35  
 Such magic as compels the charmed night  
 To render up thy charge: . . . and, though ne'er yet  
 Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,  
 Enough from incommunicable dream,  
 And twilight phantasms, and deep noon-day thought, 40  
 Has shone within me, that serenely now  
 And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre  
 Suspended in the solitary dome  
 Of some mysterious and deserted fane,  
 I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain 45  
 May modulate with murmurs of the air,  
 And motions of the forests and the sea,  
 And voice of living beings, and woven hymns  
 Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb 50  
 No human hands with pious reverence reared,  
 But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds  
 Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid  
 Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness:—  
 A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden decked 55  
 With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,  
 The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:—  
 Gentle, and brave, and generous,—no lorn bard  
 Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:  
 He lived, he died, he sung, in solitude. 60  
 Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,  
 And virgins, as unknown he passed, have pined  
 And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.  
 The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,  
 And Silence, too enamoured of that voice, 65  
 Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision, and bright silver dream,  
 His infancy was nurtured. Every sight  
 And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,  
 Sent to his heart its choicest impulses. 70  
 The fountains of divine philosophy  
 Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,

Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past  
 In truth or fable consecrates, he felt  
 And knew. When early youth had passed, he left 75  
 His cold fireside and alienated home  
 To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.  
 Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness  
 Has lured his fearless steps; and he has bought  
 With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men, 80  
 His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps  
 He like her shadow has pursued, where'er  
 The red volcano overcanopies  
 Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice  
 With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes 85  
 On black bare pointed islets ever beat  
 With sluggish surge, or where the secret caves  
 Rugged and dark, winding among the springs  
 Of fire and poison, inaccessible  
 To avarice or pride, their starry domes 90  
 Of diamond and of gold expand above  
 Numberless and immeasurable halls,  
 Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines  
 Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.  
 Nor had that scene of ampler majesty 95  
 Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven  
 And the green earth lost in his heart its claims  
 To love and wonder; he would linger long  
 In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,  
 Until the doves and squirrels would partake 100  
 From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,  
 Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,  
 And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er  
 The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend  
 Her timid steps to gaze upon a form 105  
 More graceful than her own.

His wandering step

Obedient to high thoughts, has visited  
 The awful ruins of the days of old:  
 Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste  
 Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers 110  
 Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,  
 Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange  
 Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,  
 Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx,  
 Dark Æthiopia in her desert hills 115  
 Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,  
 Stupendous columns, and wild images  
 Of more than man, where marble daemons watch

The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men  
 Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around, 120  
 He lingered, poring on memorials  
 Of the world's youth, through the long burning day  
 Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon  
 Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades  
 Suspended he that task, but ever gazed 125  
 And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind  
 Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw  
 The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,  
 Her daily portion, from her father's tent, 130  
 And spread her matting for his couch, and stole  
 From duties and repose to tend his steps:—  
 Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe  
 To speak her love:—and watched his nightly sleep,  
 Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips 135  
 Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath  
 Of innocent dreams arose: then, when red morn  
 Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home  
 Wildered, and wan, and panting, she returned.

The Poet wandering on, through Arabie 140  
 And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,  
 And o'er the ærial mountains which pour down  
 Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,  
 In joy and exultation held his way;  
 Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within 145  
 Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine  
 Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,  
 Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched  
 His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep  
 There came, a dream of hopes that never yet 150  
 Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid  
 Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.  
 Her voice was like the voice of his own soul  
 Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,  
 Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held 155  
 His inmost sense suspended in its web  
 Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.  
 Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,  
 And lofty hopes of divine liberty,  
 Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy, 160  
 Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood  
 Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame  
 A permeating fire: wild numbers then

She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs  
 Subdued by its own pathos: her fair hands 165  
 Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp  
 Strange symphony, and in their branching veins  
 The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.  
 The beating of her heart was heard to fill  
 The pauses of her music, and her breath 170  
 Tumultuously accorded with those fits  
 Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,  
 As if her heart impatiently endured  
 Its bursting burthen: at the sound he turned,  
 And saw by the warm light of their own life 175  
 Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil  
 Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare,  
 Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,  
 Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips  
 Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly. 180  
 His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess  
 Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled  
 His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet  
 Her panting bosom: . . . she drew back a while,  
 Then, yielding to the irresistible joy, 185  
 With frantic gesture and short breathless cry  
 Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.  
 Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night  
 Involved and swallowed up the vision; sleep,  
 Like a dark flood suspended in its course, 190  
 Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock he started from his trance—  
 The cold white light of morning, the blue moon  
 Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,  
 The distinct valley and the vacant woods, 195  
 Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled  
 The hues of heaven that canopied his bower  
 Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,  
 The mystery and the majesty of Earth,  
 The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes 200  
 Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly  
 As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.  
 The spirit of sweet human love has sent  
 A vision to the sleep of him who spurned  
 Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues 205  
 Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;  
 He overleaps the bounds. Alas! Alas!  
 Were limbs, and breath, and being intertwined  
 Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever lost,



In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep, 218  
That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate of death  
Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,  
O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,  
And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake, 215  
Lead only to a black and watery depth,  
While death's blue vault, with loathliest vapours hung,  
Where every shade which the foul grave exhales  
Hides its dead eye from the detested day,  
Conducts, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?  
This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart, 220  
The insatiate hope which it awakened, stung  
His brain even like despair.

While daylight held  
The sky, the Poet kept mute conference  
With his still soul. At night the passion came,  
Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream, 225  
And shook him from his rest, and led him forth  
Into the darkness.—As an eagle grasped  
In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast  
Burn with the poison, and precipitates  
Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud,  
Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight 231  
O'er the wide æry wilderness: thus driven  
By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,  
Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,  
Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells, 235  
Startling with careless step the moonlight snake,  
He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight,  
Shedding the mockery of its vital hues  
Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on  
Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep 240  
Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;  
Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs  
Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind  
Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,  
Day after day a weary waste of hours, 245  
Bearing within his life the brooding care  
That ever fed on its decaying flame.  
And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair  
Sered by the autumn of strange suffering  
Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand 250  
Hung like dead bone within its withered skin;  
Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone  
As in a furnace burning secretly  
From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,  
Who ministered with human charity 255

His human wants, beheld with wondering awe  
 Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,  
 Encountering on some dizzy precipice  
 That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind  
 With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet 260  
 Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused  
 In its career: the infant would conceal  
 His troubled visage in his mother's robe  
 In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,  
 To remember their strange light in many a dream 265  
 Of after-times; but youthful maidens, taught  
 By nature, would interpret half the woe  
 That wasted him, would call him with false names  
 Brother, and friend, would press his pallid hand  
 At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path 270  
 Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasmian shore  
 He paused, a wide and melancholy waste  
 Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged  
 His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there, 275  
 Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.  
 It rose as he approached, and with strong wings  
 Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course  
 High over the immeasurable main.  
 His eyes pursued its flight.—'Thou hast a home, 280  
 Beautiful bird; thou voyagest to thine home,  
 Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck  
 With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes  
 Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.  
 And what am I that I should linger here, 285  
 With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,  
 Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned  
 To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers  
 In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven  
 That echoes not my thoughts?' A gloomy smile 290  
 Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.  
 For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly  
 Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,  
 Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,  
 With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms.

Startled by his own thoughts he looked around. 296  
 There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight  
 Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.  
 A little shallop floating near the shore  
 Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze. 300

It had been long abandoned, for its sides  
 Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints  
 Swayed with the undulations of the tide.  
 A restless impulse urged him to embark  
 And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste; 305  
 For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves  
 The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny, sea and sky  
 Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind  
 Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves.  
 Following his eager soul, the wanderer 311  
 Leaped in the boat, he spread his cloak aloft  
 On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,  
 And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea  
 Like a torn cloud before the hurricane. 315

As one that in a silver vision floats  
 Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds  
 Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly  
 Along the dark and ruffled waters fled  
 The straining boat.—A whirlwind swept it on, 320  
 With fierce gusts and precipitating force,  
 Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.  
 The waves arose. Higher and higher still  
 Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge  
 Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp. 325  
 Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war  
 Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on blast  
 Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven  
 With dark obliterating course, he sate:  
 As if their genii were the ministers 330  
 Appointed to conduct him to the light  
 Of those beloved eyes the Poet sate  
 Holding the steady helm. Evening came on,  
 The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues  
 High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray 335  
 That canopied his path o'er the waste deep;  
 Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,  
 Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks  
 O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day;  
 Night followed, clad with stars. On every side 340  
 More horribly the multitudinous streams  
 Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war  
 Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock  
 The calm and spangled sky. The little boat  
 Still fled before the storm; still fled, like foam 345

Down the steep cataract of a wintry river;  
 Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave;  
 Now leaving far behind the bursting mass  
 That fell, convulsing ocean: safely fled—  
 As if that frail and wasted human form, 350  
 Had been an elemental god.

At midnight  
 The moon arose: and lo! the ethereal cliffs  
 Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone  
 Among the stars like sunlight, and around  
 Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves 355  
 Bursting and eddying irresistibly  
 Rage and resound for ever.—Who shall save?—  
 The boat fled on,—the boiling torrent drove,—  
 The crags closed round with black and jagged arms,  
 The shattered mountain overhung the sea, 360  
 And faster still, beyond all human speed,  
 Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,  
 The little boat was driven. A cavern there  
 Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths  
 Ingulfed the rushing sea. The boat fled on 365  
 With unrelaxing speed.—‘Vision and Love!’  
 The Poet cried aloud, ‘I have beheld  
 The path of thy departure. Sleep and death  
 Shall not divide us long!’

The boat pursued  
 The windings of the cavern. Daylight shone 370  
 At length upon that gloomy river’s flow;  
 Now, where the fiercest war among the waves  
 Is calm, on the unfathomable stream  
 The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven,  
 Exposed those black depths to the azure sky, 375  
 Ere yet the flood’s enormous volume fell  
 Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound  
 That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass  
 Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm;  
 Stair above stair the eddying waters rose, 380  
 Circling immeasurably fast, and laved  
 With alternating dash the gnarled roots  
 Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms  
 In darkness over it. I’ the midst was left,  
 Reflecting, yet distorting every cloud, 385  
 A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.  
 Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,  
 With dizzy swiftness, round, and round, and round,  
 Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,

Till on the verge of the extremest curve, 390  
Where, through an opening of the rocky bank,  
The waters overflow, and a smooth spot  
Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides  
Is left, the boat paused shuddering.—Shall it sink  
Down the abyss? Shall the reverting stress 395  
Of that resistless gulf embosom it?  
Now shall it fall?—A wandering stream of wind,  
Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,  
And, lo! with gentle motion, between banks  
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream, 400  
Beneath a woven grove it sails, and, hark!  
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar,  
With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.  
Where the embowering trees recede, and leave  
A little space of green expanse, the cove 405  
Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers  
For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes,  
Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave  
Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,  
Which nought but vagrant bird, or wanton wind, 410  
Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay  
Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed  
To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,  
But on his heart its solitude returned,  
And he forbore. Not the strong impulse hid 415  
In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame  
Had yet performed its ministry: it hung  
Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud  
Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods  
Of night close over it.

The noonday sun 420

Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass  
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence  
A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,  
Scooped in the dark base of their æry rocks  
Mocking its moans, respond and roar for ever. 425  
The meeting boughs and implicated leaves  
Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as led  
By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,  
He sought in Nature's dearest haunt, some bank,  
Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark 430  
And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,  
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,  
Embraces the light beech. The pyramids  
Of the tall cedar overarching, frame  
Most solemn domes within, and far below, 435

Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,  
 The ash and the acacia floating hang  
 Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed  
 In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,  
 Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around 440  
 The grey trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes,  
 With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles,  
 Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,  
 These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs  
 Uniting their close union; the woven leaves 445  
 Make net-work of the dark blue light of day,  
 And the night's noontide clearness, mutable  
 As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns  
 Beneath these canopies extend their swells,  
 Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms 450  
 Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen  
 Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jasmine,  
 A soul-dissolving odour, to invite  
 To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,  
 Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep 455  
 Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,  
 Like vaporous shapes half seen; beyond, a well,  
 Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,  
 Images all the woven boughs above,  
 And each depending leaf, and every speck 460  
 Of azure sky, darting between their chasms;  
 Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves  
 Its portraiture, but some inconstant star  
 Between one foliated lattice twinkling fair,  
 Or, painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon, 465  
 Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,  
 Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings  
 Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld  
 Their own wan light through the reflected lines 470  
 Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth  
 Of that still fountain; as the human heart,  
 Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,  
 Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard  
 The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung 475  
 Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel  
 An unaccustomed presence, and the sound  
 Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs  
 Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed  
 To stand beside him—clothed in no bright robes 480  
 Of shadowy silver or enshrining light.

Borrowed from aught the visible world affords  
 Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;—  
 But, undulating woods, and silent well,  
 And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom 485  
 Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,  
 Held commune with him, as if he and it  
 Were all that was,—only . . . when his regard  
 Was raised by intense pensiveness, . . . two eyes,  
 Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought, 490  
 And seemed with their serene and azure smiles  
 To beckon him.

Obedient to the light  
 That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing  
 The windings of the dell.—The rivulet  
 Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine 495  
 Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell  
 Among the moss with hollow harmony  
 Dark and profound. Now on the polished stones  
 It danced; like childhood laughing as it went:  
 Then, through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept, 500  
 Reflecting every herb and drooping bud  
 That overhung its quietness.—‘O stream!  
 Whose source is inaccessibly profound,  
 Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?  
 Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness, 505  
 Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs,  
 Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course  
 Have each their type in me; and the wide sky,  
 And measureless ocean may declare as soon  
 What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud 510  
 Contains thy waters, as the universe  
 Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched  
 Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste  
 I’ the passing wind!’

Beside the grassy shore  
 Of the small stream he went; he did impress 515  
 On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught  
 Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one  
 Roused by some joyous madness from the couch  
 Of fever, he did move; yet, not like him,  
 Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame 520  
 Of his frail exultation shall be spent,  
 He must descend. With rapid steps he went  
 Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow  
 Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now

The forest's solemn canopies were changed 525  
 For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.  
 Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed  
 The struggling brook: tall spires of windlestrae  
 Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,  
 And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines 530  
 Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots  
 The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,  
 Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,  
 The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin  
 And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes 535  
 Had shone, gleam stony orbs:—so from his steps  
 Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade  
 Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds  
 And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued  
 The stream, that with a larger volume now 540  
 Rolled through the labyrinthine dell; and there  
 Fretted a path through its descending curves  
 With its wintry speed. On every side now rose  
 Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,  
 Lifted their black and barren pinnacles 545  
 In the light of evening, and, its precipice  
 Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,  
 Mid toppling stones, black gulfs and yawning caves,  
 Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues  
 To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands 550  
 Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,  
 And seems, with its accumulated crags,  
 To overhang the world: for wide expand  
 Beneath the wan stars and descending moon  
 Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams, 555  
 Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom  
 Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills  
 Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge  
 Of the remote horizon. The near scene,  
 In naked and severe simplicity, 560  
 Made contrast with the universe. A pine,  
 Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy  
 Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast  
 Yielding one only response, at each pause  
 In most familiar cadence, with the howl 565  
 The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams  
 Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river,  
 Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,  
 Fell into that immeasurable void  
 Scattering its waters to the passing winds. 570



Yet the grey precipice and solemn pine  
 And torrent, were not all;—one silent nook  
 Was there. Even on the edge of that vast mountain,  
 Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,  
 It overlooked in its serenity 575  
 The dark earth, and the bending vault of stars.  
 It was a tranquil spot, that seemed to smile  
 Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped  
 The fissured stones with its entwining arms,  
 And did embower with leaves for ever green, 580  
 And berries dark, the smooth and even space  
 Of its inviolated floor, and here  
 The children of the autumnal whirlwind bore,  
 In wanton sport, those bright leaves, whose decay,  
 Red, yellow, or ethereally pale, 585  
 Rivals the pride of summer. 'Tis the haunt  
 Of every gentle wind, whose breath can teach  
 The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,  
 One human step alone, has ever broken  
 The stillness of its solitude:—one voice 590  
 Alone inspired its echoes;—even that voice  
 Which hither came, floating among the winds,  
 And led the loveliest among human forms  
 To make their wild haunts the depository  
 Of all the grace and beauty that endured 595  
 Its motions, render up its majesty,  
 Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,  
 And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould,  
 Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss,  
 Commit the colours of that varying cheek, 600  
 That snowy breast, those dark and drooping eyes.

The dim and hornèd moon hung low, and poured  
 A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge  
 That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist  
 Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank 605  
 Wan moonlight even to fulness: not a star  
 Shone, not a sound was heard; the very winds,  
 Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice  
 Slept, clasped in his embrace.—O, storm of death!  
 Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night: 610  
 And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still  
 Guiding its irresistible career  
 In thy devastating omnipotence,  
 Art king of this frail world, from the red field  
 Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital, 615  
 The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed

Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,  
 A mighty voice invokes thee. Ruin calls  
 His brother Death. A rare and regal prey  
 He hath prepared, prowling around the world; 620  
 Glutted with which thou mayst repose, and men  
 Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,  
 Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine  
 The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green recess 625  
 The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death  
 Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,  
 Did he resign his high and holy soul  
 To images of the majestic past,  
 That paused within his passive being now, 630  
 Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe  
 Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place  
 His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk  
 Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone  
 Reclined his languid head, his limbs did rest, 635  
 Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink  
 Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he lay,  
 Surrendering to their final impulses  
 The hovering powers of life. Hope and despair,  
 The torturers, slept; no mortal pain or fear 640  
 Marred his repose, the influxes of sense,  
 And his own being unalloyed by pain,  
 Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed  
 The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there  
 At peace, and faintly smiling:—his last sight 645  
 Was the great moon, which o'er the western line  
 Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,  
 With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed  
 To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills  
 It rests, and still as the divided frame 650  
 Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,  
 That ever beat in mystic sympathy  
 With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still:  
 And when two lessening points of light alone  
 Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp 655  
 Of his faint respiration scarce did stir  
 The stagnate night:—till the minutest ray  
 Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.  
 It paused—it fluttered. But when heaven remained  
 Utterly black, the murky shades involved 660  
 An image, silent, cold, and motionless,  
 As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.

Even as a vapour fed with golden beams  
 That ministered on sunlight, ere the west  
 Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame— 665  
 No sense, no motion, no divinity—  
 A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings  
 The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream  
 Once fed with many-voicèd waves—a dream  
 Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever,  
 Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now. 671  
 O, for Medea's wondrous alchemy,  
 Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth gleam  
 With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale  
 From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! O, that God, 675  
 Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice  
 Which but one living man has drained, who now,  
 Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels  
 No proud exemption in the blighting curse  
 He bears, over the world wanders for ever, 680  
 Lone as incarnate death! O, that the dream  
 Of dark magician in his visioned cave,  
 Raking the cinders of a crucible  
 For life and power, even when his feeble hand  
 Shakes in its last decay, were the true law 685  
 Of this so lovely world! But thou art fled  
 Like some frail exhalation; which the dawn  
 Robes in its golden beams,—ah! thou hast fled!  
 The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,  
 The child of grace and genius. Heartless things 690  
 Are done and said i' the world, and many worms  
 And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth  
 From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,  
 In vesper low or joyous orison,  
 Lifts still its solemn voice:—but thou art fled— 695  
 Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes  
 Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee  
 Been purest ministers, who are, alas!  
 Now thou art not. Upon those pallid lips  
 So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes 700  
 That image sleep in death, upon that form  
 Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear  
 Be shed—not even in thought. Nor, when those hues  
 Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,  
 Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone 705  
 In the frail pauses of this simple strain,  
 Let not high verse, mourning the memory  
 Of that which is no more, or painting's woe  
 Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery

Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence, 710  
 And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain  
 To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.  
 It is a woe too 'deep for tears,' when all  
 Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,  
 Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves 715  
 Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,  
 The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;  
 But pale despair and cold tranquillity,  
 Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,  
 Birth and the grave, that are not as they were. 720

#### NOTE ON ALASTOR, BY MRS. SHELLEY

*Alastor* is written in a very different tone from *Queen Mab*. In the latter, Shelley poured out all the cherished speculations of his youth—all the irrepressible emotions of sympathy, censure, and hope, to which the present suffering, and what he considered the proper destiny, of his fellow-creatures, gave birth. *Alastor*, on the contrary, contains an individual interest only. A very few years, with their attendant events, had checked the ardour of Shelley's hopes, though he still thought them well grounded, and that to advance their fulfilment was the noblest task man could achieve.

This is neither the time nor place to speak of the misfortunes that chequered his life. It will be sufficient to say that, in all he did, he at the time of doing it believed himself justified to his own conscience; while the various ills of poverty and loss of friends brought home to him the sad realities of life. Physical suffering had also considerable influence in causing him to turn his eyes inward; inclining him rather to brood over the thoughts and emotions of his own soul than to glance abroad, and to make, as in *Queen Mab*, the whole universe the object and subject of his song. In the Spring of 1815 an eminent physician pronounced that he was dying rapidly of a consumption; abscesses were formed on his lungs, and he suffered acute spasms. Suddenly a complete change took place; and, though through life he was a martyr to pain and debility, every symptom of pulmonary disease vanished. His nerves, which nature had formed sensitive to an unexampled degree, were rendered still more susceptible by the state of his health.

As soon as the peace of 1814 had opened the Continent, he went abroad. He visited some of the more magnificent scenes of Switzerland, and returned to England from Lucerne, by the Reuss and the Rhine. The river-navigation enchanted him. In his favourite poem of *Thalaba*, his imagination had been excited by a description of such a voyage. In the summer of 1815, after a tour along the southern coast of Devonshire and a visit to Clifton, he rented a house on Bishopgate Heath, on the borders of Windsor Forest, where he enjoyed several months of comparative health and tranquil happiness. The later summer months were

warm and dry. Accompanied by a few friends, he visited the source of the Thames, making a voyage in a wherry from Windsor to Cricklade. His beautiful stanzas in the churchyard of Lechlade were written on that occasion. *Alastor* was composed on his return. He spent his days under the oak-shades of Windsor Great Park; and the magnificent wood land was a fitting study to inspire the various descriptions of forest-scenery we find in the poem.

None of Shelley's poems is more characteristic than this. The solemn spirit that reigns throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet's heart in solitude—the mingling of the exulting joy which the various aspects of the visible universe inspires with the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts—give a touching interest to the whole. The death which he had often contemplated during the last months as certain and near he here represented in such colours as had, in his lonely musings, soothed his soul to peace. The versification sustains the solemn spirit which breathes throughout: it is peculiarly melodious. The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative: it was the outpouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death.

## THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD

### A FRAGMENT

#### PART I

Nec tantum prodere vati,  
Quantum scire licet. Venit aetas omnis in unam  
Congeriem, miserumque premunt tot saecula pectus.  
LUCAN, *Phars.* v. 176.

How wonderful is Death,  
Death and his brother Sleep!  
One pale as yonder wan and hornèd moon,  
With lips of lurid blue,  
The other glowing like the vital morn,  
When throned on ocean's wave  
It breathes over the world:  
Yet both so passing strange and wonderful!

Hath then the iron-sceptred Skeleton,  
Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres,  
To the hell dogs that couch beneath his throne  
Cast that fair prey? Must that divinest form,  
Which love and admiration cannot view  
Without a beating heart, whose azure veins

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Steal like dark streams along a field of snow,<br>Whose outline is as fair as marble clothed<br>In light of some sublimest mind, decay?<br>Nor putrefaction's breath                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 15 |
| Leave aught of this pure spectacle<br>But loathsomeness and ruin?—<br>Spare aught but a dark theme,<br>On which the lightest heart might moralize?<br>Or is it but that downy-wingèd slumbers<br>Have charmed their nurse coy Silence near her lids<br>To watch their own repose?<br>Will they, when morning's beam<br>Flows through those wells of light,<br>Seek far from noise and day some western cave,<br>Where woods and streams with soft and pausing winds<br>A lulling murmur weave?—<br>Ianthe doth not sleep<br>The dreamless sleep of death:<br>Nor in her moonlight chamber silently<br>Doth Henry hear her regular pulses throb,<br>Or mark her delicate cheek<br>With interchange of hues mock the broad moon,<br>Outwatching weary night,<br>Without assured reward.<br>Her dewy eyes are closed;<br>On their translucent lids, whose texture fine<br>Scarce hides the dark blue orbs that burn below<br>With unapparent fire,<br>The baby Sleep is pillowed:<br>Her golden tresses shade<br>The bosom's stainless pride,<br>Twining like tendrils of the parasite<br>Around a marble column. | 20 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 25 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 30 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 35 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 40 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 45 |
| Hark! whence that rushing sound?<br>'Tis like a wondrous strain that sweeps<br>Around a lonely ruin<br>When west winds sigh and evening waves respond<br>In whispers from the shore:<br>'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes<br>Which from the unseen lyres of dells and groves<br>The genii of the breezes sweep.<br>Floating on waves of music and of light,<br>The chariot of the Daemon of the World<br>Descends in silent power:<br>Its shape reposed within: slight as some cloud<br>That catches but the palest tinge of day                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 50 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 55 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 60 |

- When evening yields to night,  
 Bright as that fibrous woof when stars indue  
 Its transitory robe.  
 Four shapeless shadows bright and beautiful  
 Draw that strange car of glory, reins of light 65  
 Check their unearthly speed; they stop and fold  
 Their wings of braided air:  
 The Daemon leaning from the ethereal car  
 Gazed on the slumbering maid.  
 Human eye hath ne'er beheld 70  
 A shape so wild, so bright, so beautiful,  
 As that which o'er the maiden's charmed sleep  
 Waving a starry wand,  
 Hung like a mist of light.  
 Such sounds as breathed around like odorous winds  
 Of wakening spring arose, 76  
 Filling the chamber and the moonlight sky.  
 Maiden, the world's supremest spirit  
 Beneath the shadow of her wings  
 Folds all thy memory doth inherit 80  
 From ruin of divinest things,  
 Feelings that lure thee to betray,  
 And light of thoughts that pass away.  
 For thou hast earned a mighty boon,  
 The truths which wisest poets see 85  
 Dimly, thy mind may make its own,  
 Rewarding its own majesty,  
 Entranced in some diviner mood  
 Of self-oblivious solitude.
- Custom, and Faith, and Power thou spurnest; 90  
 From hate and awe thy heart is free;  
 Ardent and pure as day thou burnest,  
 For dark and cold mortality  
 A living light, to cheer it long,  
 The watch-fires of the world among. 95
- Therefore from nature's inner shrine,  
 Where gods and fiends in worship bend,  
 Majestic spirit, be it thine  
 The flame to seize, the veil to rend,  
 Where the vast snake Eternity 100  
 In charmed sleep doth ever lie.
- All that inspires thy voice of love,  
 Or speaks in thy unclosing eyes,  
 Or through thy frame doth burn or move,  
 Or think, or feel, awake, arise! 105

Spirit, leave for mine and me  
Earth's unsubstantial mimicry!

It ceased, and from the mute and moveless frame

A radiant spirit arose,  
All beautiful in naked purity. 110  
Robed in its human hues it did ascend,  
Disparting as it went the silver clouds,  
It moved towards the car, and took its seat  
Beside the Daemon shape.

Obedient to the sweep of æry song, 115

The mighty ministers  
Unfurled their prismatic wings.  
The magic car moved on;  
The night was fair, innumerable stars  
Studded heaven's dark blue vault; 120  
The eastern wave grew pale  
With the first smile of morn.  
The magic car moved on.

From the swift sweep of wings  
The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew; 125  
And where the burning wheels

Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak  
Was traced a line of lightning.

Now far above a rock the utmost verge  
Of the wide earth it flew, 130

The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow  
Frowned o'er the silver sea.

Far, far below the chariot's stormy path,  
Calm as a slumbering babe,  
Tremendous ocean lay. 135

Its broad and silent mirror gave to view  
The pale and waning stars,  
The chariot's fiery track,  
And the grey light of morn  
Tingeing those fleecy clouds 140

That cradled in their folds the infant dawn.

The chariot seemed to fly  
Through the abyss of an immense concave,  
Radiant with million constellations, tinged  
With shades of infinite colour, 145  
And semicircled with a belt  
Flashing incessant meteors.

As they approached their goal,  
The winged shadows seemed to gather speed.  
The sea no longer was distinguished; earth. 150



Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere, suspended  
     In the black concave of heaven  
     With the sun's cloudless orb,  
     Whose rays of rapid light  
 Parted around the chariot's swifter course,  
 And fell like ocean's feathery spray  
     Dashed from the boiling surge  
     Before a vessel's prow.

155

    The magic car moved on.  
     Earth's distant orb appeared  
 The smallest light that twinkles in the heavens,  
     Whilst round the chariot's way  
 Innumerable systems widely rolled,  
     And countless spheres diffused  
     An ever varying glory.

160

It was a sight of wonder! Some were horned,  
 And like the moon's argentine crescent hung  
 In the dark dome of heaven; some did shed  
 A clear mild beam like Hesperus, while the sea  
 Yet glows with fading sunlight; others dashed  
 Athwart the night with trains of bickering fire,  
 Like spherèd worlds to death and ruin driven;  
 Some shone like stars, and as the chariot passed  
     Bedimmed all other light.

170

    Spirit of Nature! here  
 In this interminable wilderness  
 Of worlds, at whose involved immensity  
     Even soaring fancy staggers,  
     Here is thy fitting temple.  
     Yet not the lightest leaf  
 That quivers to the passing breeze  
     Is less instinct with thee,—  
     Yet not the meanest worm,  
 That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead,  
     Less shares thy eternal breath.  
     Spirit of Nature! thou  
 Imperishable as this glorious scene,  
     Here is thy fitting temple.

175

180

185

If solitude hath ever led thy steps  
 To the shore of the immeasurable sea,  
     And thou hast lingered there  
     Until the sun's broad orb  
 Seemed resting on the fiery line of ocean,  
 Thou must have marked the braided webs of gold  
     That without motion hang

190

195

Over the sinking sphere:  
 Thou must have marked the billowy mountain clouds,  
 Edged with intolerable radiancy,  
   Towering like rocks of jet  
   Above the burning deep: 200  
 And yet there is a moment  
   When the sun's highest point  
 Peers like a star o'er ocean's western edge,  
 When those far clouds of feathery purple gleam  
 Like fairy lands girt by some heavenly sea: 205  
 Then has thy rapt imagination soared  
 Where in the midst of all existing things  
 The temple of the mightiest Daemon stands.

Yet not the golden islands  
 That gleam amid yon flood of purple light, 210  
 Nor the feathery curtains  
 That canopy the sun's resplendent couch,  
   Nor the burnished ocean waves  
   Paving that gorgeous dome,  
   So fair, so wonderful a sight 215  
 As the eternal temple could afford.  
 The elements of all that human thought  
 Can frame of lovely or sublime, did join  
 To rear the fabric of the fane, nor aught  
 Of earth may image forth its majesty. 220  
 Yet likest evening's vault that faëry hall,  
 As heaven low resting on the wave it spread  
   Its floors of flashing light,  
   Its vast and azure dome;  
 And on the verge of that obscure abyss 225  
 Where crystal battlements o'erhang the gulf  
 Of the dark world, ten thousand spheres diffuse  
 Their lustre through its adamantine gates.

    The magic car no longer moved;  
     The Daemon and the Spirit 230  
     Entered the eternal gates.  
     Those clouds of æry gold  
     That slept in glittering billows  
     Beneath the azure canopy,  
 With the ethereal footsteps trembled not; 235  
     While slight and odorous mists  
 Floated to strains of thrilling melody  
 Through the vast columns and the pearly shrines.

    The Daemon and the Spirit  
 Approached the overhanging battlement, 240

Below lay stretched the boundless universe!

There, far as the remotest line

That limits swift imagination's flight,

Unending orbs mingled in mazy motion,

Immutably fulfilling

Eternal Nature's law.

Above, below, around,

The circling systems formed

A wilderness of harmony,

Each with undeviating aim

In eloquent silence through the depths of space

Pursued its wondrous way.—

245

250

Awile the Spirit paused in ecstasy.

Yet soon she saw, as the vast spheres swept by,

Strange things within their belted orbs appear.

Like animated frenzies, dimly moved

Shadows, and skeletons, and fiendly shapes,

Thronging round human graves, and o'er the dead

Sculpturing records for each memory

In verse, such as malignant gods pronounce,

Blasting the hopes of men, when heaven and hell

Confounded burst in ruin o'er the world:

And they did build vast trophies, instruments

Of murder, human bones, barbaric gold,

Skins torn from living men, and towers of skulls

With sightless holes gazing on blinder heaven,

Mitres, and crowns, and brazen chariots stained

With blood, and scrolls of mystic wickedness,

The sanguine codes of venerable crime.

The likeness of a thronèd king came by,

When these had passed, bearing upon his brow

A threefold crown; his countenance was calm,

His eye severe and cold; but his right hand

Was charged with bloody coin, and he did gnaw

By fits, with secret smiles, a human heart

Concealed beneath his robe; and motley shapes,

A multitudinous throng, around him knelt,

With bosoms bare, and bowed heads, and false looks

Of true submission, as the sphere rolled by.

Brooking no eye to witness their foul shame,

Which human hearts must feel, while human tongues

Tremble to speak, they did rage horribly,

Breathing in self-contempt fierce blasphemies

Against the Daemon of the World, and high

Hurling their armèd hands where the pure Spirit,

Serene and inaccessibly secure,

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285

Stood on an isolated pinnacle,  
 The flood of ages combating below,  
 The depth of the unbounded universe  
     Above, and all around  
 Necessity's unchanging harmony.

290

## PART II

O HAPPY Earth! reality of Heaven!  
 To which those restless powers that ceaselessly  
 Throng through the human universe aspire;  
 Thou consummation of all mortal hope!  
 Thou glorious prize of blindly-working will!  
 Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,  
 Verge to one point and blend for ever there:  
 Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place!  
 Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,  
 Languor, disease, and ignorance dare not come:  
 O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!

295

300

Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams,  
 And dim forebodings of thy loveliness,  
 Haunting the human heart, have there entwined  
 Those rooted hopes, that the proud Power of Evil  
 Shall not for ever on this fairest world  
 Shake pestilence and war, or that his slaves  
 With blasphemy for prayer, and human blood  
 For sacrifice, before his shrine for ever  
 In adoration bend, or Erebus  
 With all its banded fiends shall not uprise  
 To overwhelm in envy and revenge  
 The dauntless and the good, who dare to hurl  
 Defiance at his throne, girt tho' it be  
 With Death's omnipotence. Thou hast beheld  
 His empire, o'er the present and the past;  
 It was a desolate sight—now gaze on mine,  
 Futurity. Thou hoary giant Time,  
 Render thou up thy half-devoured babes,—  
 And from the cradles of eternity,  
 Where millions lie lulled to their portioned sleep  
 By the deep murmuring stream of passing things,  
 Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit, behold  
 Thy glorious destiny!

305

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320

                                    The Spirit saw  
 The vast frame of the renovated world  
 Smile in the lap of Chaos, and the sense

325

Of hope thro' her fine texture did suffuse  
 Such varying glow, as summer evening casts  
 On undulating clouds and deepening lakes. 330  
 Like the vague sighings of a wind at even,  
 That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea  
 And dies on the creation of its breath,  
 And sinks and rises, fails and swells by fits,  
 Was the sweet stream of thought that with wild motion  
 Flowed o'er the Spirit's human sympathies. 336  
 The mighty tide of thought had paused awhile,  
 Which from the Daemon now like Ocean's stream  
 Again began to pour.—

To me is given

The wonders of the human world to keep— 340  
 Space, matter, time and mind—let the sight  
 Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.  
 All things are recreated, and the flame  
 Of consentaneous love inspires all life:  
 The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck 345  
 To myriads, who still grow beneath her care,  
 Rewarding her with their pure perfectness:  
 The balmy breathings of the wind inhale  
 Her virtues, and diffuse them all abroad:  
 Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere, 350  
 Glows in the fruits, and mantles on the stream;  
 No storms deform the beaming brow of heaven,  
 Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride  
 The foliage of the undecaying trees;  
 But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair, 355  
 And Autumn proudly bears her matron grace,  
 Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of Spring,  
 Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit  
 Reflects its tint and blushes into love.

The habitable earth is full of bliss; 360  
 Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled  
 By everlasting snow-storms round the poles,  
 Where matter dared not vegetate nor live,  
 But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude  
 Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed; 365  
 And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles  
 Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls  
 Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand,  
 Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet  
 To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves 370  
 And melodise with man's blest nature there.

The vast tract of the parched and sandy waste  
 Now teems with countless rills and shady woods,  
 Corn-fields and pastures and white cottages;  
 And where the startled wilderness did hear 375  
 A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood,  
 Hymning his victory, or the milder snake  
 Crushing the bones of some frail antelope  
 Within his brazen folds—the dewy lawn,  
 Offering sweet incense to the sunrise, smiles 380  
 To see a babe before his mother's door,  
 Share with the green and golden basilisk  
 That comes to lick his feet, his morning's meal.

Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail  
 Has seen, above the illimitable plain, 385  
 Morning on night and night on morning rise,  
 Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread  
 Its shadowy mountains on the sunbright sea,  
 Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves  
 So long have mingled with the gusty wind 390  
 In melancholy loneliness, and swept  
 The desert of those ocean solitudes,  
 But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing shriek,  
 The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm,  
 Now to the sweet and many-mingling sounds 395  
 Of kindest human impulses respond:  
 Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem,  
 With lightsome clouds and shining seas between,  
 And fertile valleys, resonant with bliss,  
 Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave, 400  
 Which like a toil-worn labourer leaps to shore,  
 To meet the kisses of the flowerets there.

Man chief perceives the change, his being notes  
 The gradual renovation, and defines  
 Each movement of its progress on his mind. 405  
 Man, where the gloom of the long polar night  
 Lowered o'er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil,  
 Where scarce the hardiest herb that braves the frost  
 Basked in the moonlight's ineffectual glow, 409  
 Shrank with the plants, and darkened with the night;  
 Nor where the tropics bound the realms of day  
 With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame,  
 Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere  
 Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and fed  
 Unnatural vegetation, where the land 415  
 Teemed with all earthquake, tempest and disease,

Was man a nobler being; slavery  
Had crushed him to his country's blood-stained dust.

Even where the milder zone afforded man  
A seeming shelter, yet contagion there, 420  
Blighting his being with unnumbered ills,  
Spread like a quenchless fire; nor truth availed  
Till late to arrest its progress, or create  
That peace which first in bloodless victory waved  
Her snowy standard o'er this favoured clime: 425  
There man was long the train-bearer of slaves,  
The mimic of surrounding misery,  
The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,  
The bloodhound of religion's hungry zeal.

Here now the human being stands adorning 430  
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind;  
Blest from his birth with all bland impulses,  
Which gently in his noble bosom wake  
All kindly passions and all pure desires.  
Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing, 435  
Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal  
Dawns on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise  
In time-destroying infiniteness gift  
With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks  
The unprevailing hoariness of age, 440  
And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene  
Swift as an unremembered vision, stands  
Immortal upon earth: no longer now  
He slays the beast that sports around his dwelling  
And horribly devours its mangled flesh, 445  
Or drinks its vital blood, which like a stream  
Of poison thro' his fevered veins did flow  
Feeding a plague that secretly consumed  
His feeble frame, and kindling in his mind  
Hatred, despair, and fear and vain belief, 450  
The germs of misery, death, disease, and crime.  
No longer now the winged habitants,  
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,  
Flee from the form of man; but gather round,  
And prune their sunny feathers on the hands 455  
Which little children stretch in friendly sport  
Towards these dreadless partners of their play.  
All things are void of terror: man has lost  
His desolating privilege, and stands  
An equal amidst equals: happiness 460  
And science dawn though late upon the earth;

Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame;  
 Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,  
 Reason and passion cease to combat there;  
 Whilst mind unfettered o'er the earth extends 465  
 Its all-subduing energies, and wields  
 The sceptre of a vast dominion there.

Mild is the slow necessity of death:  
 The tranquil spirit fails beneath its grasp,  
 Without a groan, almost without a fear, 470  
 Resigned in peace to the necessity,  
 Calm as a voyager to some distant land,  
 And full of wonder, full of hope as he.  
 The deadly germs of languor and disease  
 Waste in the human frame, and Nature gifts 475  
 With choicest boons her human worshippers.  
 How vigorous now the athletic form of age!  
 How clear its open and unwrinkled brow!  
 Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, or care,  
 Had stamped the seal of grey deformity 480  
 On all the mingling lineaments of time.  
 How lovely the intrepid front of youth!  
 How sweet the smiles of taintless infancy.

Within the massy prison's mouldering courts,  
 Fearless and free the ruddy children play, 485  
 Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows  
 With the green ivy and the red wall-flower,  
 That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom;  
 The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron,  
 There rust amid the accumulated ruins 490  
 Now mingling slowly with their native earth:  
 There the broad beam of day, which feebly once  
 Lighted the cheek of lean captivity  
 With a pale and sickly glare, now freely shines  
 On the pure smiles of infant playfulness: 495  
 No more the shuddering voice of hoarse despair  
 Peals through the echoing vaults, but soothing notes  
 Of Ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds  
 And merriment are resonant around.

The fanes of Fear and Falsehood hear no more 500  
 The voice that once waked multitudes to war  
 Thundering thro' all their aisles: but now respond  
 To the death dirge of the melancholy wind:  
 It were a sight of awfulness to see  
 The works of faith and slavery, so vast, 505



# THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD

31

So sumptuous, yet withal so perishing!  
 Even as the corpse that rests beneath their wall.  
 A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death  
 To-day, the breathing marble glows above  
 To decorate its memory, and tongues  
 Are busy of its life: to-morrow, worms  
 In silence and in darkness seize their prey.  
 These ruins soon leave not a wreck behind:  
 Their elements, wide-scattered o'er the globe,  
 To happier shapes are moulded, and become  
 Ministrant to all blissful impulses:  
 Thus human things are perfected, and earth,  
 Even as a child beneath its mother's love,  
 Is strengthened in all excellence, and grows  
 Fairer and nobler with each passing year.

510

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520

Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the scene  
 Closes in steadfast darkness, and the past  
 Fades from our charmed sight. My task is done:  
 Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders are thine own,  
 With all the fear and all the hope they bring.  
 My spells are past: the present now recurs.  
 Ah me! a pathless wilderness remains  
 Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand.

525

Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course,  
 Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue  
 The gradual paths of an aspiring change:  
 For birth and life and death, and that strange state  
 Before the naked powers that thro' the world  
 Wander like winds have found a human home,  
 All tend to perfect happiness, and urge  
 The restless wheels of being on their way,  
 Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,  
 Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal:  
 For birth but wakes the universal mind  
 Whose mighty streams might else in silence flow  
 Thro' the vast world, to individual sense  
 Of outward shows, whose unexperienced shape  
 New modes of passion to its frame may lend;  
 Life is its state of action, and the store  
 Of all events is aggregated there  
 That variegate the eternal universe;  
 Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,  
 That leads to azure isles and beaming skies  
 And happy regions of eternal hope.  
 Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on:

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Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,  
 Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,  
 Yet spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,  
 To feed with kindest dews its favourite flower,  
 That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens, 555  
 Lighting the green wood with its sunny smile.

Fear not then, Spirit, death's disrobing hand,  
 So welcome when the tyrant is awake,  
 So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch flares;  
 'Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour, 560  
 The transient gulf-dream of a startling sleep.  
 For what thou art shall perish utterly,  
 But what is thine may never cease to be;  
 Death is no foe to virtue: earth has seen  
 Love's brightest roses on the scaffold bloom, 565  
 Mingling with freedom's fadeless laurels there,  
 And presaging the truth of visioned bliss.  
 Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene  
 Of linked and gradual being has confirmed?  
 Hopes that not vainly thou, and living fires 570  
 Of mind as radiant and as pure as thou,  
 Have shone upon the paths of men—return,  
 Surpassing Spirit, to that world, where thou  
 Art destined an eternal war to wage  
 With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot 575  
 The germs of misery from the human heart.  
 Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe  
 The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,  
 Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,  
 Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease: 580  
 Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy  
 Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,  
 When fenced by power and master of the world.  
 Thou art sincere and good; of resolute mind,  
 Free from heart-withering custom's cold control, 585  
 Of passion lofty, pure and unsubdued.  
 Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee,  
 And therefore art thou worthy of the boon  
 Which thou hast now received: virtue shall keep  
 Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod, 590  
 And many days of beaming hope shall bless  
 Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love.  
 Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy  
     Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch  
     Light, life and rapture from thy smile. 595

The Daemon called its wingèd ministers.  
Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car,  
That rolled beside the crystal battlement,  
Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness.

The burning wheels inflame 600  
The steep descent of Heaven's untrodden way.

Fast and far the chariot flew:  
The mighty globes that rolled  
Around the gate of the Eternal Fane  
Lessened by slow degrees, and soon appeared 605

Such tiny twinkles as the planet orbs  
That ministering on the solar power  
With borrowed light pursued their narrower way.

Earth floated then below:  
The chariot paused a moment;  
The Spirit then descended:  
And from the earth departing  
The shadows with swift wings  
Speded like thought upon the light of Heaven.

The Body and the Soul united then, 615  
A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's frame:  
Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;  
Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remained:  
She looked around in wonder and beheld  
Henry, who kneeled in silence by her couch, 620  
Watching her sleep with looks of speechless love,  
And the bright beaming stars  
That through the casement shone.

## THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

### A POEM IN TWELVE CANTOS

“Οσαις δὲ βροτὸν ἔθνος ἀγλαίαις ἀπιόμεθα  
περαίνει πρὸς ἔσχατον  
πλὸν’ ναοὶ δ’ οὔτε πεζὸς ἰὼν ἂν εὔροις  
ἐς Ὑπερβορέων ἀγῶνα θαυματὴν ὁδόν.  
Πινδ. Πυθ. x.

### PREFACE

THE Poem which I now present to the world is an attempt from which I scarcely dare to expect success, and in which a writer of established fame might fail without disgrace. It is an experiment on the temper of the public mind, as to how far a thirst for a happier condition of moral and political society survives, among the enlightened and refined, the tempests

which have shaken the age in which we live. I have sought to enlist the harmony of metrical language, the ethereal combinations of the fancy, the rapid and subtle transitions of human passion, all those elements which essentially compose a Poem, in the cause of a liberal and comprehensive morality; and in the view of kindling within the bosoms of my readers a virtuous enthusiasm for those doctrines of liberty and justice, that faith and hope in something good, which neither violence nor misrepresentation nor prejudice can ever totally extinguish among mankind.

For this purpose I have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character, diversified with moving and romantic adventures, and appealing, in contempt of all artificial opinions or institutions, to the common sympathies of every human breast. I have made no attempt to recommend the motives which I would substitute for those at present governing mankind, by methodical and systematic argument. I would only awaken the feelings, so that the reader should see the beauty of true virtue, and be incited to those inquiries which have led to my moral and political creed, and that of some of the sublimest intellects in the world. The Poem therefore (with the exception of the first canto, which is purely introductory) is narrative, not didactic. It is a succession of pictures illustrating the growth and progress of individual mind aspiring after excellence, and devoted to the love of mankind; its influence in refining and making pure the most daring and uncommon impulses of the imagination, the understanding, and the senses; its impatience at 'all the oppressions which are done under the sun'; its tendency to awaken public hope, and to enlighten and improve mankind; the rapid effects of the application of that tendency; the awakening of an immense nation from their slavery and degradation to a true sense of moral dignity and freedom; the bloodless dethronement of their oppressors, and the unveiling of the religious frauds by which they had been deluded into submission; the tranquillity of successful patriotism, and the universal toleration and benevolence of true philanthropy; the treachery and barbarity of hired soldiers; vice not the object of punishment and hatred, but kindness and pity; the faithlessness of tyrants; the confederacy of the Rulers of the World, and the restoration of the expelled Dynasty by foreign arms; the massacre and extermination of the Patriots, and the victory of established power; the consequences of legitimate despotism, — civil war, famine, plague, superstition, and an utter extinction of the domestic affections; the judicial murder of the advocates of Liberty; the temporary triumph of oppression, that secure earnest of its final and inevitable fall; the transient nature of ignorance and error, and the eternity of genius and virtue. Such is the series of delineations of which the Poem consists. And, if the lofty passions with which it has been my scope to distinguish this story shall not excite in the reader a generous impulse, an ardent thirst for excellence, an interest profound and strong such as belongs to no meaner desires, let not the failure be imputed to a natural unfitness for human sympathy in these sublime and animating themes. It is the business of the Poet to communicate to others the

pleasure and the enthusiasm arising out of those images and feelings in the vivid presence of which within his own mind consists at once his inspiration and his reward.

The panic which, like an epidemic transport, seized upon all classes of men during the excesses consequent upon the French Revolution, is gradually giving place to sanity. It has ceased to be believed that whole generations of mankind ought to consign themselves to a hopeless inheritance of ignorance and misery, because a nation of men who had been dupes and slaves for centuries were incapable of conducting themselves with the wisdom and tranquillity of freemen so soon as some of their fetters were partially loosened. That their conduct could not have been marked by any other characters than ferocity and thoughtlessness is the historical fact from which liberty derives all its recommendations, and falsehood the worst features of its deformity. There is a reflux in the tide of human things which bears the shipwrecked hopes of men into a secure haven after the storms are past. Methinks, those who now live have survived an age of despair.

The French Revolution may be considered as one of those manifestations of a general state of feeling among civilised mankind produced by a defect of correspondence between the knowledge existing in society and the improvement or gradual abolition of political institutions. The year 1788 may be assumed as the epoch of one of the most important crises produced by this feeling. The sympathies connected with that event extended to every bosom. The most generous and amiable natures were those which participated the most extensively in these sympathies. But such a degree of unmingled good was expected as it was impossible to realise. If the Revolution had been in every respect prosperous, then misrule and superstition would lose half their claims to our abhorrence, as fetters which the captive can unlock with the slightest motion of his fingers, and which do not eat with poisonous rust into the soul. The revulsion occasioned by the atrocities of the demagogues, and the re-establishment of successive tyrannies in France, was terrible, and felt in the remotest corner of the civilised world. Could they listen to the plea of reason who had groaned under the calamities of a social state according to the provisions of which one man riots in luxury whilst another famishes for want of bread? Can he who the day before was a trampled slave suddenly become liberal-minded, forbearing, and independent? This is the consequence of the habits of a state of society to be produced by resolute perseverance and indefatigable hope, and long-suffering and long-believing courage, and the systematic efforts of generations of men of intellect and virtue. Such is the lesson which experience teaches now. But, on the first reverses of hope in the progress of French liberty, the sanguine eagerness for good overleaped the solution of these questions, and for a time extinguished itself in the unexpectedness of their result. Thus, many of the most ardent and tender-hearted of the worshippers of public good have been morally ruined by what a partial glimpse of the events they deplored appeared to show as the melancholy desolation of

all their cherished hopes. Hence gloom and misanthropy have become the characteristics of the age in which we live, the solace of a disappointment that unconsciously finds relief only in the wilful exaggeration of its own despair. This influence has tainted the literature of the age with the hopelessness of the minds from which it flows. Metaphysics,<sup>1</sup> and inquiries into moral and political science, have become little else than vain attempts to revive exploded superstitions, or sophisms like those<sup>2</sup> of Mr. Malthus, calculated to lull the oppressors of mankind into a security of everlasting triumph. Our works of fiction and poetry have been overshadowed by the same infectious gloom. But mankind appear to me to be emerging from their trance. I am aware, methinks, of a slow, gradual, silent change. In that belief I have composed the following Poem.

I do not presume to enter into competition with our greatest contemporary Poets. Yet I am unwilling to tread in the footsteps of any who have preceded me. I have sought to avoid the imitation of any style of language or versification peculiar to the original minds of which it is the character; designing that, even if what I have produced be worthless, it should still be properly my own. Nor have I permitted any system relating to mere words to divert the attention of the reader, from whatever interest I may have succeeded in creating, to my own ingenuity in contriving to disgust them according to the rules of criticism. I have simply clothed my thoughts in what appeared to me the most obvious and appropriate language. A person familiar with nature, and with the most celebrated productions of the human mind, can scarcely err in following the instinct, with respect to selection of language, produced by that familiarity.

There is an education peculiarly fitted for a Poet, without which genius and sensibility can hardly fill the circle of their capacities. No education, indeed, can entitle to this appellation a dull and unobservant mind, or one, though neither dull nor unobservant, in which the channels of communication between thought and expression have been obstructed or closed. How far it is my fortune to belong to either of the latter classes I cannot know. I aspire to be something better. The circumstances of my accidental education have been favourable to this ambition. I have been familiar from boyhood with mountains and lakes and the sea, and the solitude of forests: Danger, which sports upon the brink of precipices, has been my playmate. I have trodden the glaciers of the Alps, and lived under the eye of Mont Blanc. I have been a wanderer among distant fields. I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a

<sup>1</sup> I ought to except Sir W. Drumond's *Academical Questions*; a volume of very acute and powerful metaphysical criticism.

<sup>2</sup> It is remarkable, as a symptom of the revival of public hope, that Mr. Malthus has assigned, in the later editions of his work, an indefinite dominion to moral restraint over the principle of population. This concession answers all the inferences from his doctrine unfavourable to human improvement, and reduces the *Essay on Population* to a commentary illustrative of the unanswerableness of *Political Justice*.

rapid stream among mountains. I have seen populous cities, and have watched the passions which rise and spread, and sink and change, amongst assembled multitudes of men. I have seen the theatre of the more visible ravages of tyranny and war; cities and villages reduced to scattered groups of black and roofless houses, and the naked inhabitants sitting famished upon their desolated thresholds. I have conversed with living men of genius. The poetry of ancient Greece and Rome, and modern Italy, and our own country, has been to me, like external nature, a passion and an enjoyment. Such are the sources from which the materials for the imagery of my Poem have been drawn. I have considered Poetry in its most comprehensive sense; and have read the Poets and the Historians and the Metaphysicians<sup>1</sup> whose writings have been accessible to me, and have looked upon the beautiful and majestic scenery of the earth, as common sources of those elements which it is the province of the Poet to embody and combine. Yet the experience and the feelings to which I refer do not in themselves constitute men Poets, but only prepares them to be the auditors of those who are. How far I shall be found to possess that more essential attribute of Poetry, the power of awakening in others sensations like those which animate my own bosom, is that which, to speak sincerely, I know not; and which, with an acquiescent and contented spirit, I expect to be taught by the effect which I shall produce upon those whom I now address.

I have avoided, as I have said before, the imitation of any contemporary style. But there must be a resemblance, which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances belonging to the times in which they live; though each is in a degree the author of the very influence by which his being is thus pervaded. Thus, the tragic poets of the age of Pericles; the Italian revivers of ancient learning; those mighty intellects of our own country that succeeded the Reformation, the translators of the Bible, Shakespeare, Spenser, the dramatists of the reign of Elizabeth, and Lord Bacon<sup>2</sup>; the colder spirits of the interval that succeeded;—all resemble each other, and differ from every other in their several classes. In this view of things, Ford can no more be called the imitator of Shakespeare than Shakespeare the imitator of Ford. There were perhaps few other points of resemblance between these two men than that which the universal and inevitable influence of their age produced. And this is an influence which neither the meanest scribbler nor the sublimest genius of any era can escape; and which I have not attempted to escape.

I have adopted the stanza of Spenser (a measure inexpressibly beautiful), not because I consider it a finer model of poetical harmony than the

<sup>1</sup> In this sense there may be such a thing as perfectibility in works of fiction, notwithstanding the concession often made by the advocates of human improvement, that perfectibility is a term applicable only to science.

<sup>2</sup> Milton stands alone in the age which he illumined.

blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton, but because in the latter there is no shelter for mediocrity; you must either succeed or fail. This perhaps an aspiring spirit should desire. But I was enticed also by the brilliancy and magnificence of sound which a mind that has been nourished upon musical thoughts can produce by a just and harmonious arrangement of the pauses of this measure. Yet there will be found some instances where I have completely failed in this attempt; and one, which I here request the reader to consider as an erratum, where there is left, most inadvertently, an alexandrine in the middle of a stanza.

But in this as in every other respect I have written fearlessly. It is the misfortune of this age that its Writers, too thoughtless of immortality, are exquisitely sensible to temporary praise or blame. They write with the fear of Reviews before their eyes. This system of criticism sprang up in that torpid interval when Poetry was not. Poetry, and the art which professes to regulate and limit its powers, cannot subsist together. Longinus could not have been the contemporary of Homer, nor Boileau of Horace. Yet this species of criticism never presumed to assert an understanding of its own: it has always, unlike true science, followed, not preceded, the opinion of mankind, and would even now bribe with worthless adulation some of our greatest Poets to impose gratuitous fetters on their own imaginations, and become unconscious accomplices in the daily murder of all genius either not so aspiring or not so fortunate as their own. I have sought therefore to write, as I believe that Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton, wrote, with an utter disregard of anonymous censure. I am certain that calumny and misrepresentation, though it may move me to compassion, cannot disturb my peace. I shall understand the expressive silence of those sagacious enemies who dare not trust themselves to speak. I shall endeavour to extract, from the midst of insult and contempt and maledictions, those admonitions which may tend to correct whatever imperfections such censurers may discover in this my first serious appeal to the Public. If certain Critics were as clear-sighted as they are malignant, how great would be the benefit to be derived from their virulent writings! As it is, I fear I shall be malicious enough to be amused with their paltry tricks and lame invectives. Should the Public judge that my composition is worthless, I shall indeed bow before the tribunal from which Milton received his crown of immortality; and shall seek to gather, if I live, strength from that defeat, which may nerve me to some new enterprise of thought which may *not* be worthless. I cannot conceive that Lucretius, when he meditated that poem whose doctrines are yet the basis of our metaphysical knowledge, and whose eloquence has been the wonder of mankind, wrote in awe of such censure as the hired sophists of the impure and superstitious noblemen of Rome might affix to what he should produce. It was at the period when Greece was led captive, and Asia made tributary to the Republic, fast verging itself to slavery and ruin, that a multitude of Syrian captives, bigoted to the worship of their obscene Ashtaroth, and the unworthy successors of Socrates and Zeno. found there a precarious subsistence by administering, under



the name of freedmen, to the vices and vanities of the great. These wretched men were skilled to plead, with a superficial but plausible set of sophisms, in favour of that contempt for virtue which is the portion of slaves, and that faith in portents, the most fatal substitute for benevolence in the imaginations of men, which, arising from the enslaved communities of the East, then first began to overwhelm the western nations in its stream. Were these the kind of men whose disapprobation the wise and lofty-minded Lucretius should have regarded with a salutary awe? The latest and perhaps the meanest of those who follow in his footsteps would disdain to hold life on such conditions.

The Poem now presented to the Public occupied little more than six months in the composition. That period has been devoted to the task with unremitting ardour and enthusiasm. I have exercised a watchful and earnest criticism on my work as it grew under my hands. I would willingly have sent it forth to the world with that perfection which long labour and revision is said to bestow. But I found that, if I should gain something in exactness by this method, I might lose much of the newness and energy of imagery and language as it flowed fresh from my mind. And, although the mere composition occupied no more than six months, the thoughts thus arranged were slowly gathered in as many years.

I trust that the reader will carefully distinguish between those opinions which have a dramatic propriety in reference to the characters which they are designed to elucidate, and such as are properly my own. The erroneous and degrading idea which men have conceived of a Supreme Being, for instance, is spoken against, but not the Supreme Being itself. The belief which some superstitious persons whom I have brought upon the stage entertain of the Deity, as injurious to the character of his benevolence, is widely different from my own. In recommending also a great and important change in the spirit which animates the social institutions of mankind, I have avoided all flattery to those violent and malignant passions of our nature which are ever on the watch to mingle with and to alloy the most beneficial innovations. There is no quarter given to Revenge, or Envy, or Prejudice. Love is celebrated everywhere as the sole law which should govern the moral world.

#### DEDICATION

There is no danger to a man, that knows  
What life and death is: there's not any law  
Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful  
That he should stoop to any other law.—CHAPMAN.

#### TO MARY — —

##### I

So now my summer task is ended, Mary,  
And I return to thee, mine own heart's home;  
As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faëry,  
Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome;



Wrought linkèd armour for my soul, before  
 It might walk forth to war among mankind;  
 Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more  
 Within me, till there came upon my mind  
 A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined. 45

## VI

Alas, that love should be a blight and snare  
 To those who seek all sympathies in one!—  
 Such once I sought in vain; then black despair,  
 The shadow of a starless night, was thrown  
 Over the world in which I moved alone:— 50  
 Yet never found I one not false to me,  
 Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone  
 Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be  
 Aught but a lifeless clod, until revived by thee.

## VII

Thou Friend, whose presence on my wintry heart 55  
 Fell, like bright Spring upon some herbless plain;  
 How beautiful and calm and free thou wert  
 In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain  
 Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,  
 And walked as free as light the clouds among, 60  
 Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain  
 From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung  
 To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long!

## VIII

No more alone through the world's wilderness,  
 Although I trod the paths of high intent, 65  
 I journeyed now: no more companionless,  
 Where solitude is like despair, I went.—  
 There is the wisdom of a stern content  
 When Poverty can blight the just and good,  
 When Infamy dares mock the innocent, 70  
 And cherished friends turn with the multitude  
 To trample: this was ours, and we unshaken stood!

## IX

Now has descended a serener hour,  
 And with inconstant fortune, friends return;  
 Though suffering leaves the knowledge and the power 75  
 Which says:—Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.

And from thy side two gentle babes are born  
 To fill our home with smiles, and thus are we  
 Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn;  
 And these delights, and thou, have been to me 80  
 The parents of the Song I consecrate to thee.

## X

Is it, that now my inexperienced fingers  
 But strike the prelude of a loftier strain?  
 Or, must the lyre on which my spirit lingers  
 Soon pause in silence, ne'er to sound again, 85  
 Though it might shake the Anarch Custom's reign,  
 And charm the minds of men to Truth's own sway  
 Holier than was Amphion's? I would fain  
 Reply in hope—but I am worn away,  
 And Death and Love are yet contending for their prey. 90

## XI

And what art thou? I know, but dare not speak:  
 Time may interpret to his silent years.  
 Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek,  
 And in the light thine ample forehead wears, 95  
 And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy tears,  
 And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy  
 Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears:  
 And through thine eyes, even in thy soul I see  
 A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

## XII

They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth, 100  
 Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child.  
 I wonder not—for One then left this earth  
 Whose life was like a setting planet mild,  
 Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled 105  
 Of its departing glory; still her fame  
 Shines on thee, through the tempests dark and wild  
 Which shake these latter days; and thou canst claim  
 The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name.

## XIII

One voice came forth from many a mighty spirit,  
 Which was the echo of three thousand years; 110  
 And the tumultuous world stood mute to hear it,  
 As some lone man who in a desert hears

The music of his home:—unwonted fears  
 Fell on the pale oppressors of our race,  
 And Faith, and Custom, and low-thoughted cares, 115  
 Like thunder-stricken dragons, for a space  
 Left the torn human heart, their food and dwelling-place.

## XIV

Truth's deathless voice pauses among mankind!  
 If there must be no response to my cry—  
 If men must rise and stamp with fury blind 120  
 On his pure name who loves them,—thou and I,  
 Sweet friend! can look from our tranquillity  
 Like lamps into the world's tempestuous night,—  
 Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by  
 Which wrap them from the foundering seaman's sight, 125  
 That burn from year to year with unextinguished light.

## CANTO I

## I

When the last hope of trampled France had failed  
 Like a brief dream of unremaining glory,  
 From visions of despair I rose, and scaled  
 The peak of an æreal promontory, 130  
 Whose caverned base with the vexed surge was hoary;  
 And saw the golden dawn break forth, and waken  
 Each cloud, and every wave:—but transitory  
 The calm: for sudden, the firm earth was shaken,  
 As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken. 135

## II

So as I stood, one blast of muttering thunder  
 Burst in far peals along the waveless deep,  
 When, gathering fast, around, above, and under,  
 Long trains of tremulous mist began to creep,  
 Until their complicating lines did steep 140  
 The orient sun in shadow:—not a sound  
 Was heard; one horrible repose did keep  
 The forests and the floods, and all around  
 Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the ground.

## III

Hark! 'tis the rushing of a wind that sweeps 145  
 Earth and the ocean. See! the lightnings yawn  
 Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps  
 Glitter and boil beneath: it rages on,

One mighty stream, whirlwind and waves upthrown,  
Lightning, and hail, and darkness eddying by. 150

There is a pause—the sea-birds, that were gone  
Into their caves to shriek, come forth, to spy  
What calm has fall'n on earth, what light is in the sky.

## IV

For, where the irresistible storm had cloven  
That fearful darkness, the blue sky was seen 155  
Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven  
Most delicately, and the ocean green,  
Beneath that opening spot of blue serene,  
Quivered like burning emerald: calm was spread  
On all below; but far on high, between 160  
Earth and the upper air, the vast clouds fled,  
Countless and swift as leaves on autumn's tempest shed.

## V

For ever, as the war became more fierce  
Between the whirlwinds and the rack on high,  
That spot grew more serene; blue light did pierce 165  
The woof of those white clouds, which seem to lie  
Far, deep, and motionless; while through the sky  
The pallid semicircle of the moon  
Passed on, in slow and moving majesty;  
Its upper horn arrayed in mists, which soon 170  
But slowly fled, like dew beneath the beams of noon.

## VI

I could not choose but gaze; a fascination  
Dwelt in that moon, and sky, and clouds, which drew  
My fancy thither, and in expectation  
Of what I knew not, I remained:—the hue 175  
Of the white moon, amid that heaven so blue,  
Suddenly stained with shadow did appear;  
A speck, a cloud, a shape, approaching grew,  
Like a great ship in the sun's sinking sphere  
Beheld afar at sea, and swift it came anear. 180

## VII

Even like a bark, which from a chasm of mountains,  
Dark, vast, and overhanging, on a river  
Which there collects the strength of all its fountains,  
Comes forth, whilst with the speed its frame doth quiver,

# THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

45

Sails, oars, and stream, tending to one endeavour; 185  
 So, from that chasm of light a wingèd Form  
 On all the winds of heaven approaching ever  
 Floated, dilating as it came: the storm  
 Pursued it with fierce blasts, and lightnings swift and warm.

## VIII

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed, 190  
 Suspending thought and breath; a monstrous sight!  
 For in the air do I behold indeed  
 An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight:—  
 And now relaxing its impetuous flight,  
 Before the aëreal rock on which I stood, 195  
 The Eagle, hovering, wheeled to left and right,  
 And hung with lingering wings over the flood,  
 And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.

## IX

A shaft of light upon its wings descended,  
 And every golden feather gleamed therein— 200  
 Feather and scale, inextricably blended.  
 The Serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin  
 Shone through the plumes its coils were twined within  
 By many a swoln and knotted fold, and high  
 And far, the neck, receding lithe and thin, 205  
 Sustained a crested head, which warily  
 Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's steadfast eye.

## X

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling  
 With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sailed  
 Incessantly—sometimes on high concealing 210  
 Its lessening orbs, sometimes as if it failed,  
 Drooped through the air; and still it shrieked and wailed,  
 And casting back its eager head, with beak  
 And talon unremittingly assailed  
 The wreathed Serpent, who did ever seek 215  
 Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

## XI

What life, what power, was kindled and arose  
 Within the sphere of that appalling fray!  
 For, from the encounter of those wondrous foes,  
 A vapour like the sea's suspended spray 220

Hung gathered: in the void air, far away,  
 Floated the shattered plumes; bright scales did leap,  
 Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,  
 Like sparks into the darkness;—as they sweep,  
 Blood stains the snowy foam of the tumultuous deep. 225

## XII

Swift chances in that combat—many a check,  
 And many a change, a dark and wild turmoil;  
 Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck  
 Locked in stiff rings his adamantine coil,  
 Until the Eagle, faint with pain and toil, 230  
 Remitted his strong flight, and near the sea  
 Languidly fluttered, hopeless so to foil  
 His adversary, who then reared on high  
 His red and burning crest, radiant with victory.

## XIII

Then on the white edge of the bursting surge, 235  
 Where they had sunk together, would the Snake  
 Relax his suffocating grasp, and scourge  
 The wind with his wild writhings; for to break  
 That chain of torment, the vast bird would shake  
 The strength of his unconquerable wings 240  
 As in despair, and with his sinewy neck,  
 Dissolve in sudden shock those linkèd rings,  
 Then soar—as swift as smoke from a volcano springs.

## XIV

Wile baffled wile, and strength encountered strength,  
 Thus long, but unprevailing:—the event 245  
 Of that portentous fight appeared at length:  
 Until the lamp of day was almost spent  
 It had endured, when lifeless, stark, and rent,  
 Hung high that mighty Serpent, and at last  
 Fell to the sea, while o'er the continent, 250  
 With clang of wings and scream the Eagle passed,  
 Heavily borne away on the exhausted blast.

## XV

And with it fled the tempest, so that ocean  
 And earth and sky shone through the atmosphere—  
 Only, 'twas strange to see the red commotion 255  
 Of waves like mountains o'er the sinking sphere



Of sunset sweep, and their fierce roar to hear  
 Amid the calm: down the steep path I wound  
 To the sea-shore—the evening was most clear  
 And beautiful, and there the sea I found 260  
 Calm as a cradled child in dreamless slumber bound.

## XVI

There was a Woman, beautiful as morning,  
 Sitting beneath the rocks, upon the sand  
 Of the waste sea—fair as one flower adorning  
 An icy wilderness—each delicate hand 265  
 Lay crossed upon her bosom, and the band  
 Of her dark hair had fall'n, and so she sate  
 Looking upon the waves; on the bare strand  
 Upon the sea-mark a small boat did wait,  
 Fair as herself, like Love by Hope left desolate. 270

## XVII

It seemed that this fair Shape had looked upon  
 That unimaginable fight, and now  
 That her sweet eyes were weary of the sun,  
 As brightly it illustrated her woe;  
 For in the tears which silently to flow 275  
 Paused not, its lustre hung: she watching aye  
 The foam-wreaths which the faint tide wove below  
 Upon the spangled sands, groaned heavily,  
 And after every groan looked up over the sea.

## XVIII

And when she saw the wounded Serpent make 280  
 His path between the waves, her lips grew pale,  
 Parted, and quivered; the tears ceased to break  
 From her immovable eyes; no voice of wail  
 Escaped her; but she rose, and on the gale  
 Loosening her star-bright robe and shadowy hair 285  
 Poured forth her voice; the caverns of the vale  
 That opened to the ocean, caught it there,  
 And filled with silver sounds the overflowing air.

## XIX

She spake in language whose strange melody  
 Might not belong to earth. I hear, alone, 290  
 What made its music more melodious be,  
 The pity and the love of every tone;

But to the Snake those accents sweet were known  
 His native tongue and hers; nor did he beat  
 The hoar spray idly then, but winding on 295  
 Through the green shadows of the waves that meet  
 Near to the shore, did pause beside her snowy feet.

## XX

Then on the sands the Woman sate again,  
 And wept and clasped her hands, and all between,  
 Renewed the unintelligible strain 300  
 Of her melodious voice and eloquent mien;  
 And she unveiled her bosom, and the green  
 And glancing shadows of the sea did play  
 O'er its marmoreal depth:—one moment seen,  
 For ere the next, the Serpent did obey 305  
 Her voice, and, coiled in rest in her embrace it lay.

## XXI

Then she arose, and smiled on me with eyes  
 Serene yet sorrowing, like that planet fair,  
 While yet the daylight lingereth in the skies  
 Which cleaves with arrowy beams the dark-red air, 310  
 And said: 'To grieve is wise, but the despair  
 Was weak and vain which led thee here from sleep:  
 This shalt thou know, and more, if thou dost dare  
 With me and with this Serpent, o'er the deep,  
 A voyage divine and strange, companionship to keep.' 315

## XXII

Her voice was like the wildest, saddest tone,  
 Yet sweet, of some loved voice heard long ago.  
 I wept. 'Shall this fair woman all alone,  
 Over the sea with that fierce Serpent go?  
 His head is on her heart, and who can know 320  
 How soon he may devour his feeble prey?'—  
 Such were my thoughts, when the tide gan to flow;  
 And that strange boat like the moon's shade did sway  
 Amid reflected stars that in the waters lay:—

## XXIII

A boat of rare device, which had no sail 325  
 But its own curvèd prow of thin moonstone,  
 Wrought like a web of texture fine and frail,  
 To catch those gentlest winds which are not known

To breathe, but by the steady speed alone  
 With which it cleaves the sparkling sea; and now 330  
 We are embarked—the mountains hang and frown  
 Over the starry deep that gleams below,  
 A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go.

## XXIV

And as we sailed, a strange and awful tale  
 That Woman told, like such mysterious dream 335  
 As makes the slumberer's cheek with wonder pale!  
 'Twas midnight, and around, a shoreless stream,  
 Wide ocean rolled, when that majestic theme  
 Shrined in her heart found utterance, and she bent  
 Her looks on mine; those eyes a kindling beam 340  
 Of love divine into my spirit sent,  
 And ere her lips could move, made the air eloquent.

## XXV

'Speak not to me, but hear! Much shalt thou learn,  
 Much must remain unthought, and more untold,  
 In the dark Future's ever-flowing urn: 345  
 Know then, that from the depth of ages old,  
 Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold  
 Ruling the world with a divided lot,  
 Immortal, all-pervading, manifold,  
 Twin Genii, equal Gods—when life and thought 350  
 Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential Nought.

## XXVI

'The earliest dweller of the world, alone,  
 Stood on the verge of chaos. Lo! afar  
 O'er the wide wild abyss two meteors shone,  
 Sprung from the depth of its tempestuous jar: 355  
 A blood-red Comet and the Morning Star  
 Mingling their beams in combat—as he stood,  
 All thoughts within his mind waged mutual war,  
 In dreadful sympathy—when to the flood  
 That fair Star fell, he turned and shed his brother's blood.

## XXVII

'Thus evil triumphed, and the Spirit of evil, 361  
 One Power of many shapes which none may know,  
 One Shape of many names; the Fiend did revel  
 In victory, reigning o'er a world of woe,

For the new race of man went to and fro, 365  
 Famished and homeless, loathed and loathing, wild,  
 And hating good—for his immortal foe,  
 He changed from starry shape, beauteous and mild,  
 To a dire Snake, with man and beast unreconciled.

## XXVIII

'The darkness lingering o'er the dawn of things, 370  
 Was Evil's breath and life; this made him strong  
 To soar aloft with overshadowing wings;  
 And the great Spirit of Good did creep among  
 The nations of mankind, and every tongue  
 Cursed and blasphemed him as he passed; for none 375  
 Knew good from evil, though their names were hung  
 In mockery o'er the fane where many a groan,  
 As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did own,—

## XXIX

'The Fiend, whose name was Legion; Death, Decay,  
 Earthquake and Blight, and Want, and Madness pale,  
 Winged and wan diseases, an array 381  
 Numerous as leaves that strew the autumnal gale;  
 Poison, a snake in flowers, beneath the veil  
 Of food and mirth hiding his mortal head;  
 And, without whom all these might nought avail, 385  
 Fear, Hatred, Faith, and Tyranny, who spread  
 Those subtle nets which snare the living and the dead.

## XXX

'His spirit is their power, and they his slaves  
 In air, and light, and thought, and language, dwell;  
 And keep their state from palaces to graves, 390  
 In all resorts of men—invisible,  
 But when, in ebon mirror, Nightmare fell  
 To tyrant or impostor bids them rise,  
 Black-winged demon forms—whom, from the hell,  
 His reign and dwelling beneath nether skies, 395  
 He loosens to their dark and blasting ministries.

## XXXI

'In the world's youth his empire was as firm  
 As its foundations . . . Soon the Spirit of Good,  
 Though in the likeness of a loathsome worm,  
 Sprang from the billows of the formless flood, 400

Which shrank and fled; and with that Fiend of blood  
 Renewed the doubtful war . . . Thrones then first shook,  
 And earth's immense and trampled multitude  
 In hope on their own powers began to look,  
 And Fear, the demon pale, his sanguine shrine forsook. 405

## XXXII

'Then Greece arose, and to its bards and sages,  
 In dream, the golden-pinioned Genii came,  
 Even where they slept amid the night of ages,  
 Steeping their hearts in the divinest flame  
 Which thy breath kindled, Power of holiest name! 410  
 And oft in cycles since, when darkness gave  
 New weapons to thy foe, their sunlike fame  
 Upon the combat shone—a light to save,  
 Like Paradise spread forth beyond the shadowy grave.

## XXXIII

'Such is this conflict—when mankind doth strive 415  
 With its oppressors in a strife of blood,  
 Or when free thoughts, like lightnings, are alive,  
 And in each bosom of the multitude  
 Justice and truth with Custom's hydra brood  
 Wage silent war; when Priests and Kings dissemble 420  
 In smiles or frowns their fierce disquietude,  
 When round pure hearts a host of hopes assemble,  
 The Snake and Eagle meet—the world's foundations tremble!

## XXXIV

'Thou hast beheld that fight—when to thy home  
 Thou dost return, steep not its hearth in tears; 425  
 Though thou may'st hear that earth is now become  
 The tyrant's garbage, which to his compeers,  
 The vile reward of their dishonoured years,  
 He will dividing give.—The victor Fiend,  
 Omnipotent of yore, now quails, and fears 430  
 His triumph dearly won, which soon will lend  
 An impulse swift and sure to his approaching end.

## XXXV

'List, stranger, list, mine is an human form,  
 Like that thou wearest—touch me—shrink not now!  
 My hand thou feel'st is not a ghost's, but warm 435  
 With human blood.—'Twas many years ago,

Since first my thirsting soul aspired to know  
 The secrets of this wondrous world, when deep  
 My heart was pierced with sympathy, for woe  
 Which could not be mine own—and thought did keep,  
 In dream, unnatural watch beside an infant's sleep. 441

## XXXVI

'Woe could not be mine own, since far from men  
 I dwelt, a free and happy orphan child,  
 By the sea-shore, in a deep mountain-glen;  
 And near the waves, and through the forests wild, 445  
 I roamed, to storm and darkness reconciled:  
 For I was calm while tempest shook the sky:  
 But when the breathless heavens in beauty smiled,  
 I wept, sweet tears, yet too tumultuously  
 For peace, and clasped my hands aloft in ecstasy. 450

## XXXVII

'These were forebodings of my fate—before  
 A woman's heart beat in my virgin breast,  
 It had been nurtured in divinest lore:  
 A dying poet gave me books, and blessed  
 With wild but holy talk the sweet unrest 455  
 In which I watched him as he died away—  
 A youth with hoary hair—a fleeting guest  
 Of our lone mountains: and this lore did sway  
 My spirit like a storm, contending there alway.

## XXXVIII

'Thus the dark tale which history doth unfold 460  
 I knew, but not, methinks, as others know,  
 For they weep not; and Wisdom had unrolled  
 The clouds which hide the gulf of mortal woe,—  
 To few can she that warning vision show—  
 For I loved all things with intense devotion; 465  
 So that when Hope's deep source in fullest flow,  
 Like earthquake did uplift the stagnant ocean  
 Of human thoughts—mine shook beneath the wide emotion.

## XXXIX

'When first the living blood through all these veins  
 Kindled a thought in sense, great France sprang forth,  
 And seized, as if to break, the ponderous chains 471  
 Which bind in woe the nations of the earth.

I saw, and started from my cottage-hearth;  
 And to the clouds and waves in tameless gladness,  
 Shrieked, till they caught immeasurable mirth— 475  
 And laughed in light and music: soon, sweet madness  
 Was poured upon my heart, a soft and thrilling sadness.

## XL

'Deep slumber fell on me:—my dreams were fire—  
 Soft and delightful thoughts did rest and hover  
 Like shadows o'er my brain; and strange desire, 480  
 The tempest of a passion, raging over  
 My tranquil soul, its depths with light did cover,—  
 Which passed; and calm, and darkness, sweeter far,  
 Came—then I loved; but not a human lover!  
 For when I rose from sleep, the Morning Star 485  
 Shone through the woodbine-wreaths which round my casement  
 were.

## XLI

'Twas like an eye which seemed to smile on me.  
 I watched, till by the sun made pale, it sank  
 Under the billows of the heaving sea;  
 But from its beams deep love my spirit drank, 490  
 And to my brain the boundless world now shrank  
 Into one thought—one image—yes, for ever!  
 Even like the dayspring, poured on vapours dank,  
 The beams of that one Star did shoot and quiver  
 Through my benighted mind—and were extinguished never.

## XLII

'The day passed thus: at night, methought in dream 496  
 A shape of speechless beauty did appear:  
 It stood like light on a careering stream  
 Of golden clouds which shook the atmosphere;  
 A wingèd youth, his radiant brow did wear 500  
 The Morning Star: a wild dissolving bliss  
 Over my frame he breathed, approaching near,  
 And bent his eyes of kindling tenderness  
 Near mine, and on my lips impressed a lingering kiss,—

## XLIII

'And said: "A Spirit loves thee, mortal maiden, 505  
 How wilt thou prove thy worth?" Then joy and sleep  
 Together fled, my soul was deeply laden,  
 And to the shore I went to muse and weep;

But as I moved, over my heart did creep  
 A joy less soft, but more profound and strong 510  
 Than my sweet dream; and it forbade to keep  
 The path of the sea-shore: that Spirit's tongue  
 Seemed whispering in my heart, and bore my steps along.

## XLIV

'How, to that vast and peopled city led,  
 Which was a field of holy warfare then, 515  
 I walked among the dying and the dead,  
 And shared in fearless deeds with evil men,  
 Calm as an angel in the dragon's den—  
 How I braved death for liberty and truth,  
 And spurned at peace, and power, and fame—and when  
 Those hopes had lost the glory of their youth, 521  
 How sadly I returned—might move the hearer's ruth:

## XLV

'Warm tears throng fast! the tale may not be said—  
 Know then, that when this grief had been subdued,  
 I was not left, like others, cold and dead; 525  
 The Spirit whom I loved, in solitude  
 Sustained his child: the tempest-shaken wood,  
 The waves, the fountains, and the hush of night—  
 These were his voice, and well I understood  
 His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright 530  
 With silent stars, and Heaven was breathless with delight.

## XLVI

'In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers,  
 When the dim nights were moonless, have I known  
 Joys which no tongue can tell; my pale lip quivers  
 When thought revisits them:—know thou alone, 535  
 That after many wondrous years were flown,  
 I was awakened by a shriek of woe;  
 And over me a mystic robe was thrown,  
 By viewless hands, and a bright Star did glow  
 Before my steps—the Snake then met his mortal foe.' 540

## XLVII

'Thou fearest not then the Serpent on thy heart?'  
 'Fear it!' she said, with brief and passionate cry,  
 And spake no more: that silence made me start—  
 I looked, and we were sailing pleasantly,



# THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

53

Swift as a cloud between the sea and sky;  
 Beneath the rising moon seen far away,  
 Mountains of ice, like sapphire, piled on high,  
 Hemming the horizon round, in silence lay  
 On the still waters—these we did approach alway.

545

## XLVIII

And swift and swifter grew the vessel's motion,  
 So that a dizzy trance fell on my brain—  
 Wild music woke me: we had passed the ocean  
 Which girds the pole, Nature's remotest reign—  
 And we glode fast o'er a pellucid plain  
 Of waters, azure with the noontide day.  
 Ethereal mountains shone around—a Fane  
 Stood in the midst, girt by green isles which lay  
 On the blue sunny deep, resplendent far away.

550

555

## XLIX

It was a Temple, such as mortal hand  
 Has never built, nor ecstasy, nor dream  
 Reared in the cities of enchanted land:  
 'Twas likest Heaven, ere yet day's purple stream  
 Ebbs o'er the western forest, while the gleam  
 Of the unrisen moon among the clouds  
 Is gathering—when with many a golden beam  
 The thronging constellations rush in crowds,  
 Having with fire the sky and the marmoreal floods.

560

565

## L

Like what may be conceived of this vast dome,  
 When from the depths which thought can seldom pierce  
 Genius beholds it rise, his native home,  
 Girt by the deserts of the Universe;  
 Yet, nor in painting's light, or mightier verse,  
 Or sculpture's marble language, can invest  
 That shape to mortal sense—such glooms immerse  
 That incommunicable sight, and rest  
 Upon the labouring brain and overburdened breast.

570

575

## LI

Winding among the lawny islands fair,  
 Whose blosmy forests starred the shadowy deep,  
 The wingless boat paused where an ivory stair  
 Its fretwork in the crystal sea did steep,

580

Encircling that vast Fane's aërial heap:  
 We disembarked, and through a portal wide  
 We passed—whose roof of moonstone carved, did keep  
 A glimmering o'er the forms on every side,  
 Sculptures like life and thought; immovable, deep-eyed. 585

## LII

We came to a vast hall, whose glorious roof  
 Was diamond, which had drank the lightning's sheen  
 In darkness, and now poured it through the woof  
 Of spell-inwoven clouds hung there to screen 590  
 Its blinding splendour—through such veil was seen  
 That work of subtlest power, divine and rare;  
 Orb above orb, with starry shapes between,  
 And hornèd moons, and meteors strange and fair,  
 On night-black columns poised—one hollow hemisphere!

## LIII

Ten thousand columns in that quivering light 595  
 Distinct—between whose shafts wound far away  
 The long and labyrinthine aisles—more bright  
 With their own radiance than the Heaven of Day;  
 And on the jasper walls around, there lay  
 Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought, 600  
 Which did the Spirit's history display;  
 A tale of passionate change, divinely taught,  
 Which, in their wingèd dance, unconscious Genii wrought.

## LIV

Beneath, there sate on many a sapphire throne,  
 The Great, who had departed from mankind, 605  
 A mighty Senate;—some, whose white hair shone  
 Like mountain snow, mild, beautiful, and blind;  
 Some, female forms, whose gestures beamed with mind;  
 And ardent youths, and children bright and fair;  
 And some had lyres whose strings were intertwined 610  
 With pale and clinging flames, which ever there  
 Waked faint yet thrilling sounds that pierced the crystal air.

## LV

One seat was vacant in the midst, a throne,  
 Reared on a pyramid like sculptured flame,  
 Distinct with circling steps which rested on 615  
 Their own deep fire—soon as the Woman came

Into that hall, she shrieked the Spirit's name  
 And fell; and vanished slowly from the sight.  
 Darkness arose from her dissolving frame,  
 Which gathering, filled that dome of woven light, 620  
 Blotting its spherèd stars with supernatural night.

## LVI

Then first, two glittering lights were seen to glide  
 In circles on the amethystine floor,  
 Small serpent eyes trailing from side to side,  
 Like meteors on a river's grassy shore, 625  
 They round each other rolled, dilating more  
 And more—then rose, commingling into one,  
 One clear and mighty planet hanging o'er  
 A cloud of deepest shadow, which was thrown  
 Athwart the glowing steps and the crystalline throne. 630

## LVII

The cloud which rested on that cone of flame  
 Was cloven; beneath the planet sate a Form,  
 Fairer than tongue can speak or thought may frame,  
 The radiance of whose limbs rose-like and warm  
 Flowed forth, and did with softest light inform 635  
 The shadowy dome, the sculptures, and the state  
 Of those assembled shapes—with clinging charm  
 Sinking upon their hearts and mine. He sate  
 Majestic, yet most mild—calm, yet compassionate.

## LVIII

Wonder and joy a passing faintness threw 640  
 Over my brow—a hand supported me,  
 Whose touch was magic strength: an eye of blue  
 Looked into mine, like moonlight, soothingly;  
 And a voice said.—'Thou must a listener be  
 This day—two mighty Spirits now return, 645  
 Like birds of calm, from the world's raging sea,  
 They pour fresh light from Hope's immortal urn;  
 A tale of human power—despair not—list and learn!'

## LIX

I looked, and lo! one stood forth eloquently,  
 His eyes were dark and deep, and the clear brow 650  
 Which shadowed them was like the morning sky,  
 The cloudless Heaven of Spring, when in their flow

Through the bright air, the soft winds as they blow  
 Wake the green world—his gestures did obey  
 The oracular mind that made his features glow, 655  
 And where his curvèd lips half-open lay,  
 Passion's divinest stream had made impetuous way.

## LX

Beneath the darkness of his outspread hair  
 He stood thus beautiful: but there was One  
 Who sate beside him like his shadow there, 660  
 And held his hand—far lovelier—she was known  
 To be thus fair, by the few lines alone  
 Which through her floating locks and gathered cloak,  
 Glances of soul-dissolving glory, shone:—  
 None else beheld her eyes—in him they woke 665  
 Memories which found a tongue as thus he silence broke.

## CANTO II

## I

THE starlight smile of children, the sweet looks  
 Of women, the fair breast from which I fed,  
 The murmur of the unrepining brooks,  
 And the green light which, shifting overhead, 670  
 Some tangled bower of vines around me shed,  
 The shells on the sea-sand, and the wild flowers,  
 The lamplight through the rafters cheerly spread,  
 And on the twining flax—in life's young hours  
 These sights and sounds did nurse my spirit's folded powers.

## II

In Argolis, beside the echoing sea, 676  
 Such impulses within my mortal frame  
 Arose, and they were dear to memory,  
 Like tokens of the dead:—but others came  
 Soon, in another shape: the wondrous fame 680  
 Of the past world, the vital words and deeds  
 Of minds whom neither time nor change can tame,  
 Traditions dark and old, whence evil creeds  
 Start forth, and whose dim shade a stream of poison feeds.

## III

I heard, as all have heard, the various story 685  
 Of human life, and wept unwilling tears.  
 Feeble historians of its shame and glory,  
 False disputants on all its hopes and fears,

## THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

56

Victims who worshipped ruin,—chroniclers  
Of daily scorn, and slaves who loathed their state  
Yet, flattering power, had given its ministers  
A throne of judgement in the grave:—'twas fate,  
That among such as these my youth should seek its mate.

690

### IV

The land in which I lived, by a fell bane  
Was withered up. Tyrants dwelt side by side,  
And stabled in our homes,—until the chain  
Stifled the captive's cry, and to abide  
That blasting curse men had no shame—all vied  
In evil, slave and despot; fear with lust  
Strange fellowship through mutual hate had tied,  
Like two dark serpents tangled in the dust,  
Which on the paths of men their mingling poison thrust.

695

700

### V

Earth, our bright home, its mountains and its waters,  
And the ethereal shapes which are suspended  
Over its green expanse, and those fair daughters,  
The clouds, of Sun and Ocean, who have blended  
The colours of the air since first extended  
It cradled the young world, none wandered forth  
To see or feel: a darkness had descended  
On every heart: the light which shows its worth,  
Must among gentle thoughts and fearless take its birth.

705

710

### VI

This vital world, this home of happy spirits,  
Was as a dungeon to my blasted kind;  
All that despair from murdered hope inherits  
They sought, and in their helpless misery blind,  
A deeper prison and heavier chains did find,  
And stronger tyrants:—a dark gulf before,  
The realm of a stern Ruler, yawned; behind,  
Terror and Time conflicting drove, and bore  
On their tempestuous flood the shrieking wretch from shore.

715

### VII

Out of that Ocean's wrecks had Guilt and Woe  
Framed a dark dwelling for their homeless thought,  
And, starting at the ghosts which to and fro  
Glide o'er its dim and gloomy strand, had brought

721

The worship thence which they each other taught. 725  
 Well might men loathe their life, well might they turn  
 Even to the ills again from which they sought  
 Such refuge after death!—well might they learn  
 To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern!

## VIII

For they all pined in bondage; body and soul, 730  
 Tyrant and slave, victim and torturer, bent  
 Before one Power, to which supreme control  
 Over their will by their own weakness lent,  
 Made all its many names omnipotent;  
 All symbols of things evil, all divine; 735  
 And hymns of blood or mockery, which rent  
 The air from all its fanes, did intertwine  
 Imposture's impious toils round each discordant shrine.

## IX

I heard, as all have heard, life's various story,  
 And in no careless heart transcribed the tale; 740  
 But, from the sneers of men who had grown hoary  
 In shame and scorn, from groans of crowds made pale  
 By famine, from a mother's desolate wail  
 O'er her polluted child, from innocent blood  
 Poured on the earth, and brows anxious and pale 745  
 With the heart's warfare; did I gather food  
 To feed my many thoughts: a tameless multitude!

## X

I wandered through the wrecks of days departed  
 Far by the desolated shore, when even  
 O'er the still sea and jagged islets darted 750  
 The light of moonrise; in the northern Heaven,  
 Among the clouds near the horizon driven,  
 The mountains lay beneath our planet pale;  
 Around me, broken tombs and columns riven  
 Looked vast in twilight, and the sorrowing gale 755  
 Waked in those ruins gray its everlasting wail!

## XI

I knew not who had framed these wonders then,  
 Nor had I heard the story of their deeds;  
 But dwellings of a race of mightier men,  
 And monuments of less ungente creeds 760

Tell their own tale to him who wisely heeds  
 The language which they speak; and now, to me  
 The moonlight making pale the blooming weeds,  
 The bright stars shining in the breathless sea,  
 Interpreted those scrolls of mortal mystery. 765

## XII

Such man has been, and such may yet become!  
 Ay, wiser, greater, gentler, even than they  
 Who on the fragments of yon shattered dome  
 Have stamped the sign of power—I felt the sway  
 Of the vast stream of ages bear away 770  
 My floating thoughts—my heart beat loud and fast—  
 Even as a storm let loose beneath the ray  
 Of the still moon, my spirit onward past  
 Beneath truth's steady beams upon its tumult cast.

## XIII

It shall be thus no more! too long, too long, 775  
 Sons of the glorious dead, have ye lain bound  
 In darkness and in ruin!—Hope is strong,  
 Justice and Truth their wingèd child have found—  
 Awake! arise! until the mighty sound  
 Of your career shall scatter in its gust 780  
 The thrones of the oppressor, and the ground  
 Hide the last altar's unregarded dust,  
 Whose Idol has so long betrayed your impious trust!

## XIV

It must be so—I will arise and waken  
 The multitude, and like a sulphurous hill, 785  
 Which on a sudden from its snows has shaken  
 The swoon of ages, it shall burst and fill  
 The world with cleansing fire: it must, it will—  
 It may not be restrained!—and who shall stand  
 Amid the rocking earthquake steadfast still, 790  
 But Laon? on high Freedom's desert land  
 A tower whose marble walls the leaguèd storms withstand!

## XV

One summer night, in commune with the hope  
 Thus deeply fed, amid those ruins gray  
 I watched, beneath the dark sky's starry cope; 795  
 And ever from that hour upon me lay

The burden of this hope, and night or day,  
 In vision or in dream, clove to my breast:  
 Among mankind, or when gone far away  
 To the lone shores and mountains, 'twas a guest 800  
 Which followed where I fled, and watched when I did rest.

## XVI

These hopes found words through which my spirit sought  
 To weave a bondage of such sympathy,  
 As might create some response to the thought  
 Which ruled me now—and as the vapours lie 805  
 Bright in the outspread morning's radiancy,  
 So were these thoughts invested with the light  
 Of language: and all bosoms made reply  
 On which its lustre streamed, whene'er it might  
 Through darkness wide and deep those tranced spirits smite.

## XVII

Yes, many an eye with dizzy tears was dim, 811  
 And oft I thought to clasp my own heart's brother,  
 When I could feel the listener's senses swim,  
 And hear his breath its own swift gaspings smother  
 Even as my words evoked them—and another, 815  
 And yet another, I did fondly deem,  
 Felt that we all were sons of one great mother;  
 And the cold truth such sad reverse did seem,  
 As to awake in grief from some delightful dream.

## XVIII

Yes, oft beside the ruined labyrinth 820  
 Which skirts the hoary caves of the green deep,  
 Did Laon and his friend, on one gray plinth,  
 Round whose worn base the wild waves hiss and leap,  
 Resting at eve, a lofty converse keep:  
 And that this friend was false, may now be said 825  
 Calmly—that he like other men could weep  
 Tears which are lies, and could betray and spread  
 Snares for that guileless heart which for his own had bled.

## XIX

Then, had no great aim recompensed my sorrow,  
 I must have sought dark respite from its stress 830  
 In dreamless rest, in sleep that sees no morrow—  
 For to tread life's dismaying wilderness



Without one smile to cheer, one voice to bless,  
 Amid the snares and scoffs of human kind,  
 Is hard—but I betrayed it not, nor less 835  
 With love that scorned return, sought to unbind  
 The interwoven clouds which make its wisdom blind.

## XX

With deathless minds which leave where they have passed  
 A path of light, my soul communion knew;  
 Till from that glorious intercourse, at last, 840  
 As from a mine of magic store, I drew  
 Words which were weapons;—round my heart there grew  
 The adamantine armour of their power,  
 And from my fancy wings of golden hue  
 Sprang forth—yet not alone from wisdom's tower, 845  
 A minister of truth, these plumes young Laon bore.

## XXI

An orphan with my parents lived, whose eyes  
 Were lodestars of delight, which drew me home  
 When I might wander forth; nor did I prize  
 Aught human thing beneath Heaven's mighty dome 850  
 Beyond this child: so when sad hours were come,  
 And baffled hope like ice still clung to me,  
 Since kin were cold, and friends had now become  
 Heartless and false, I turned from all, to be,  
 Cythna, the only source of tears and smiles to thee. 855

## XXII

What wert thou then? A child most infantine,  
 Yet wandering far beyond that innocent age  
 In all but its sweet looks and mien divine:  
 Even then, methought, with the world's tyrant rage  
 A patient warfare thy young heart did wage, 860  
 When those soft eyes of scarcely conscious thought  
 Some tale, or thine own fancies, would engage  
 To overflow with tears, or converse fraught  
 With passion, o'er their depths its fleeting light had wrought.

## XXIII

She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness, 865  
 A power, that from its objects scarcely drew  
 One impulse of her being—in her lightness  
 Most like some radiant cloud of morning dew,

Which wanders through the waste air's pathless blue,  
 To nourish some far desert: she did seem 876  
 Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew,  
 Like the bright shade of some immortal dream  
 Which walks, when tempest sleeps, the wave of life's dark stream.

## XXIV

As mine own shadow was this child to me,  
 A second self, far dearer and more fair; 875  
 Which clothed in undissolving radiancy  
 All those steep paths which languor and despair  
 Of human things, had made so dark and bare,  
 But which I trod alone—nor, till bereft  
 Of friends, and overcome by lonely care, 880  
 Knew I what solace for that loss was left,  
 Though by a bitter wound my trusting heart was cleft.

## XXV

Once she was dear, now she was all I had  
 To love in human life—this playmate sweet,  
 This child of twelve years old—so she was made 885  
 My sole associate, and her willing feet  
 Wandered with mine where earth and ocean meet,  
 Beyond the æreal mountains whose vast cells  
 The unreposing billows ever beat.  
 Through forests wide and old, and lawny dells 890  
 Where boughs of incense droop over the emerald wells.

## XXVI

And warm and light I felt her clasping hand  
 When twined in mine: she followed where I went,  
 Through the lone paths of our immortal land.  
 It had no waste but some memorial lent 895  
 Which strung me to my toil—some monument  
 Vital with mind: then, Cythna by my side,  
 Until the bright and beaming day were spent,  
 Would rest, with looks entreating to abide,  
 Too earnest and too sweet ever to be denied. 900

## XXVII

And soon I could not have refused her—thus  
 For ever, day and night, we two were ne'er  
 Parted, but when brief sleep divided us:  
 And when the pauses of the lulling air

Of noon beside the sea, had made a lair  
 For her soothed senses, in my arms she slept,  
 And I kept watch over her slumbers there,  
 While, as the shifting visions o'er her swept,  
 Amid her innocent rest by turns she smiled and wept.

905

## XXVIII

And, in the murmur of her dreams was heard  
 Sometimes the name of Laon:—suddenly  
 She would arise, and, like the secret bird  
 Whom sunset wakens, fill the shore and sky  
 With her sweet accents—a wild melody!  
 Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong  
 The source of passion, whence they rose, to be;  
 Triumphant strains, which, like a spirit's tongue,  
 To the enchanted waves that child of glory sung—

910

915

## XXIX

Her white arms lifted through the shadowy stream  
 Of her loose hair—oh, excellently great  
 Seemed to me then my purpose, the vast theme  
 Of those impassioned songs, when Cythna sate  
 Amid the calm which rapture doth create  
 After its tumult, her heart vibrating,  
 Her spirit o'er the ocean's floating state  
 From her deep eyes far wandering, on the wing  
 Of visions that were mine, beyond its utmost spring.

920

925

## XXX

For, before Cythna loved it, had my song  
 Peopled with thoughts the boundless universe,  
 A mighty congregation, which were strong  
 Where'er they trod the darkness to disperse  
 The cloud of that unutterable curse  
 Which clings upon mankind:—all things became  
 Slaves to my holy and heroic verse,  
 Earth, sea and sky, the planets, life and fame  
 And fate, or whate'er else binds the world's wondrous frame.

930

935

## XXXI

And this beloved child thus felt the sway  
 Of my conceptions, gathering like a cloud  
 The very wind on which it rolls away:  
 Hers too were all my thoughts, ere yet, endowed

940

With music and with light, their fountains flowed  
 In poesy; and her still and earnest face,  
 Pallid with feelings which intensely glowed  
 Within, was turned on mine with speechless grace,  
 Watching the hopes which there her heart had learned to trace

## XXXII

In me, communion with this purest being 946  
 Kindled intenser zeal, and made me wise  
 In knowledge, which, in hers mine own mind seeing,  
 Left in the human world few mysteries:  
 How without fear of evil or disguise 950  
 Was Cythna!—what a spirit strong and mild,  
 Which death, or pain or peril could despise,  
 Yet melt in tenderness! what genius wild  
 Yet mighty, was enclosed within one simple child!

## XXXIII

New lore was this—old age, with its gray hair, 955  
 And wrinkled legends of unworthy things,  
 And icy sneers, is nought: it cannot dare  
 To burst the chains which life for ever flings  
 On the entangled soul's aspiring wings,  
 So is it cold and cruel, and is made 960  
 The careless slave of that dark power which brings  
 Evil, like blight, on man, who, still betrayed,  
 Laughs o'er the grave in which his living hopes are laid.

## XXXIV

Nor are the strong and the severe to keep  
 The empire of the world: thus Cythna taught 965  
 Even in the visions of her eloquent sleep,  
 Unconscious of the power through which she wrought  
 The woof of such intelligible thought,  
 As from the tranquil strength which cradled lay  
 In her smile-peopled rest, my spirit sought 970  
 Why the deceiver and the slave has sway  
 O'er heralds so divine of truth's arising day.

## XXXV

Within that fairest form, the female mind  
 Untainted by the poison-clouds which rest  
 On the dark world, a sacred home did find: 975  
 But else, from the wide earth's maternal breast,

Victorious Evil, which had dispossessed  
 All native power, had those fair children torn,  
 And made them slaves to soothe his vile unrest,  
 And minister to lust its joys forlorn, 980  
 Till they had learned to breathe the atmosphere of scorn.

## XXXVI

This misery was but coldly felt, till she  
 Became my only friend, who had endured  
 My purpose with a wider sympathy;  
 Thus, Cythna mourned with me the servitude 985  
 In which the half of humankind were mewed  
 Victims of lust and hate, the slaves of slaves,  
 She mourned that grace and power were thrown as food  
 To the hyaena lust, who, among graves,  
 Over his loathèd meal, laughing in agony, raves. 990

## XXXVII

And I, still gazing on that glorious child,  
 Even as these thoughts flushed o'er her:—'Cythna sweet,  
 Well with the world art thou unreconciled;  
 Never will peace and human nature meet  
 Till free and equal man and woman greet 995  
 Domestic peace; and ere this power can make  
 In human hearts its calm and holy seat,  
 This slavery must be broken'—as I spake,  
 From Cythna's eyes a light of exultation brake.

## XXXVIII

She replied earnestly:—'It shall be mine, 1000  
 This task, mine, Laon!—thou hast much to gain;  
 Nor wilt thou at poor Cythna's pride repine,  
 If she should lead a happy female train  
 To meet thee over the rejoicing plain,  
 When myriads at thy call shall throng around 1005  
 The Golden City.'—Then the child did strain  
 My arm upon her tremulous heart, and wound  
 Her own about my neck, till some reply she found.

## XXXIX

I smiled, and spake not.—'Wherefore dost thou smile  
 At what I say? Laon, I am not weak, 1010  
 And though my cheek might become pale the while,  
 With thee, if thou desirest, will I seek

Through their array of banded slaves to wreak  
 Ruin upon the tyrants. I had thought  
 It was more hard to turn my unpractised cheek 1015  
 To scorn and shame, and this beloved spot  
 And thee, O dearest friend, to leave and murmur not.

## XL

‘Whence came I what I am? Thou, Laon, knowest  
 How a young child should thus undaunted be;  
 Methinks, it is a power which thou bestowest, 1020  
 Through which I seek, by most resembling thee,  
 So to become most good and great and free,  
 Yet far beyond this Ocean’s utmost roar  
 In towers and huts are many like to me,  
 Who, could they see thine eyes, or feel such lore 1025  
 As I have learnt from them, like me would fear no more.

## XLI

‘Think’st thou that I shall speak unskilfully,  
 And none will heed me? I remember now,  
 How once, a slave in tortures doomed to die,  
 Was saved, because in accents sweet and low 1030  
 He sung a song his Judge loved long ago,  
 As he was led to death.—All shall relent  
 Who hear me—tears, as mine have flowed, shall flow,  
 Hearts beat as mine now beats, with such intent  
 As renovates the world; a will omnipotent! 1035

## XLII

‘Yes, I will tread Pride’s golden palaces,  
 Through Penury’s roofless huts and squalid cells  
 Will I descend, where’er in abjectness  
 Woman with some vile slave her tyrant dwells, 1040  
 There with the music of thine own sweet spells  
 Will disenchant the captives, and will pour  
 For the despairing, from the crystal wells  
 Of thy deep spirit, reason’s mighty lore,  
 And power shall then abound, and hope arise once more.

## XLIII

‘Can man be free if woman be a slave? 1045  
 Chain one who lives, and breathes this boundless air.  
 To the corruption of a closed grave!  
 Can they whose mates are beasts, condemned to bear

Scorn, heavier far than toil or anguish, dare  
 To trample their oppressors? in their home 1050  
 Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear  
 The shape of woman—hoary Crime would come  
 Behind, and Fraud rebuild religion's tottering dome.

## XLIV

'I am a child:—I would not yet depart.  
 When I go forth alone, bearing the lamp 1055  
 Aloft which thou hast kindled in my heart,  
 Millions of slaves from many a dungeon damp  
 Shall leap in joy, as the benumbing cramp  
 Of ages leaves their limbs—no ill may harm  
 Thy Cythna ever—truth its radiant stamp 1060  
 Has fixed, as an invulnerable charm  
 Upon her children's brow, dark Falsehood to disarm.

## XLV

'Wait yet awhile for the appointed day—  
 Thou wilt depart, and I with tears stall stand  
 Watching thy dim sail skirt the ocean gray; 1065  
 Amid the dwellers of this lonely land  
 I shall remain alone—and thy command  
 Shall then dissolve the world's unquiet trance,  
 And, multitudinous as the desert sand  
 Borne on the storm, its millions shall advance, 1070  
 Thronging round thee, the light of their deliverance.

## XLVI

'Then, like the forests of some pathless mountain,  
 Which from remotest glens two warring winds  
 Involve in fire which not the loosened fountain  
 Of broadest floods might quench, shall all the kinds 1076  
 Of evil, catch from our uniting minds  
 The spark which must consume them;—Cythna then  
 Will have cast off the impotence that binds  
 Her childhood now, and through the paths of men  
 Will pass, as the charmed bird that haunts the serpent's den.

## XLVII

'We part!—O Laon, I must dare nor tremble 1081  
 To meet those looks no more!—Oh, heavy stroke!  
 Sweet brother of my soul! can I dissemble  
 The agony of this thought?'—As thus she spoke

## S H E L L E Y

1085

The gathered sobs her quivering accents broke,  
 And in my arms she hid her beating breast.  
 I remained still for tears—sudden she woke  
 As one awakes from sleep, and wildly pressed  
 My bosom, her whole frame impetuously possessed.

### XLVIII

1090

‘We part to meet again—but yon blue waste,  
 Yon desert wide and deep holds no recess,  
 Within whose happy silence, thus embraced  
 We might survive all ills in one caress:  
 Nor doth the grave—I fear ’tis passionless—  
 Nor yon cold vacant Heaven:—we meet again  
 Within the minds of men, whose lips shall bless  
 Our memory, and whose hopes its light retain  
 When these dissevered bones are trodden in the plain.’

1095

### XLIX

1100

I could not speak, though she had ceased, for now  
 The fountains of her feeling, swift and deep,  
 Seemed to suspend the tumult of their flow;  
 So we arose, and by the starlight steep  
 Went homeward—neither did we speak nor weep,  
 But, pale, were calm with passion—thus subdued  
 Like evening shades that o’er the mountains creep,  
 We moved towards our home; where, in this mood,  
 Each from the other sought refuge in solitude.

1105

## CANTO III

### I

WHAT thoughts had sway o’er Cythna’s lonely slumber  
 That night, I know not; but my own did seem  
 As if they might ten thousand years outnumber  
 Of waking life, the visions of a dream  
 Which hid in one dim gulf the troubled stream  
 Of mind; a boundless chaos wild and vast,  
 Whose limits yet were never memory’s theme:  
 And I lay struggling as its whirlwinds passed,  
 Sometimes for rapture sick, sometimes for pain aghast.

1110

1115

### II

Two hours, whose mighty circle did embrace  
 More time than might make gray the infant world,  
 Rolled thus, a weary and tumultuous space:  
 When the third came, like mist on breezes curled,

1120



From my dim sleep a shadow was unfurled:  
 Methought, upon the threshold of a cave  
 I sate with Cythna; drooping briony, pearled  
 With dew from the wild streamlet's shattered wave,  
 Hung, where we sate to taste the joys which Nature gave.

## III

We lived a day as we were wont to live, 1125  
 But Nature had a robe of glory on,  
 And the bright air o'er every shape did weave  
 Intenser hues, so that the herbless stone,  
 The leafless bough among the leaves alone, 1130  
 Had being clearer than its own could be,  
 And Cythna's pure and radiant self was shown,  
 In this strange vision, so divine to me,  
 That, if I loved before, now love was agony.

## IV

Morn fled, noon came, evening, then night descended,  
 And we prolonged calm talk beneath the sphere 1136  
 Of the calm moon—when suddenly was blended  
 With our repose a nameless sense of fear;  
 And from the cave behind I seemed to hear  
 Sounds gathering upwards!—accents incomplete, 1140  
 And stifled shrieks,—and now, more near and near,  
 A tumult and a rush of thronging feet  
 The cavern's secret depths beneath the earth did beat.

## V

The scene was changed, and away, away, away!  
 Through the air and over the sea we sped, 1145  
 And Cythna in my sheltering bosom lay,  
 And the winds bore me—through the darkness spread  
 Around, the gaping earth then vomited  
 Legions of foul and ghastly shapes, which hung  
 Upon my flight; and ever, as we fled, 1150  
 They plucked at Cythna—soon to me then clung  
 A sense of actual things those monstrous dreams among.

## VI

And I lay struggling in the impotence  
 Of sleep, while outward life had burst its bound,  
 Though, still deluded, strove the tortured sense 1155  
 To its dire wanderings to adapt the sound

Which in the light of morn was poured around  
 Our dwelling—breathless, pale, and unaware  
 I rose, and all the cottage crowded found  
 With armed men, whose glittering swords were bare, 1160  
 And whose degraded limbs the tyrant's garb did wear.

## VII

And, ere with rapid lips and gathered brow  
 I could demand the cause—a feeble shriek—  
 It was a feeble shriek, faint, far and low,  
 Arrested me—my mien grew calm and meek, 1165  
 And grasping a small knife, I went to seek  
 That voice among the crowd—'twas Cythna's cry!  
 Beneath most calm resolve did agony wreak  
 Its whirlwind rage:—so I passed quietly  
 Till I beheld, where bound, that dearest child did lie. 1170

## VIII

I started to behold her, for delight  
 And exultation, and a joyance free,  
 Solemn, serene and lofty, filled the light  
 Of the calm smile with which she looked on me:  
 So that I feared some brainless ecstasy, 1175  
 Wrought from that bitter woe, had wildered her—  
 'Farewell! farewell!' she said, as I drew nigh.  
 'At first my peace was marred by this strange stir,  
 Now I am calm as truth—its chosen minister.

## IX

'Look not so, Laon—say farewell in hope, 1180  
 These bloody men are but the slaves who bear  
 Their mistress to her task—it was my scope  
 The slavery where they drag me now, to share,  
 And among captives willing chains to wear  
 Awhile—the rest thou knowest—return, dear friend! 1185  
 Let our first triumph trample the despair  
 Which would ensnare us now, for in the end,  
 In victory or in death our hopes and fears must blend.'

## X

These words had fallen on my unheeding ear,  
 Whilst I had watched the motions of the crew 1190  
 With seeming-careless glance; not many were  
 Around her, for their comrades just withdrew

To guard some other victim—so I drew  
 My knife, and with one impulse, suddenly  
 All unaware three of their number slew, 1195  
 And grasped a fourth by the throat, and with loud cry  
 My countrymen invoked to death or liberty!

## XI

What followed then, I know not—for a stroke  
 On my raised arm and naked head, came down,  
 Filling my eyes with blood—when I awoke, 1200  
 I felt that they had bound me in my swoon,  
 And up a rock which overhangs the town,  
 By the steep path were bearing me: below,  
 The plain was filled with slaughter,—overthrown  
 The vineyards and the harvests, and the glow 1205  
 Of blazing roofs shone far o'er the white Ocean's flow.

## XII

Upon that rock a mighty column stood,  
 Whose capital seemed sculptured in the sky,  
 Which to the wanderers o'er the solitude  
 Of distant seas, from ages long gone by, 1210  
 Had made a landmark; o'er its height to fly  
 Scarcely the cloud, the vulture, or the blast,  
 Has power—and when the shades of evening lie  
 On Earth and Ocean, its carved summits cast  
 The sunken daylight far through the aerial waste. 1215

## XIII

They bore me to a cavern in the hill  
 Beneath that column, and unbound me there:  
 And one did strip me stark; and one did fill  
 A vessel from the putrid pool; one bare  
 A lighted torch, and four with friendless care 1220  
 Guided my steps the cavern-paths along,  
 Then up a steep and dark and narrow stair  
 We wound, until the torch's fiery tongue  
 Amid the gushing day beamless and pallid hung.

## XIV

They raised me to the platform of the pile, 1225  
 That column's dizzy height:—the grate of brass  
 Through which they thrust me, open stood the while,  
 As to its ponderous and suspended mass,

With chains which eat into the flesh, alas!  
 With brazen links, my naked limbs they bound: 1230  
 The grate, as they departed to repass,  
 With horrid clangour fell, and the far sound  
 Of their retiring steps in the dense gloom were drowned.

## XV

The noon was calm and bright:—around that column  
 The overhanging sky and circling sea 1235  
 Spread forth in silentness profound and solemn  
 The darkness of brief frenzy cast on me,  
 So that I knew not my own misery:  
 The islands and the mountains in the day  
 Like clouds reposed afar; and I could see 1240  
 The town among the woods below that lay,  
 And the dark rocks which bound the bright and glassy bay.

## XVI

It was so calm, that scarce the feathery weed  
 Sown by some eagle on the topmost stone  
 Swayed in the air:—so bright, that noon did breed 1245  
 No shadow in the sky beside mine own—  
 Mine, and the shadow of my chain alone.  
 Below, the smoke of roofs involved in flame  
 Rested like night, all else was clearly shown  
 In that broad glare, yet sound to me none came, 1250  
 But of the living blood that ran within my frame.

## XVII

The peace of madness fled, and ah, too soon!  
 A ship was lying on the sunny main,  
 Its sails were flagging in the breathless noon—  
 Its shadow lay beyond—that sight again 1255  
 Waked, with its presence, in my tranced brain  
 The stings of a known sorrow, keen and cold:  
 I knew that ship bore Cythna o'er the plain  
 Of waters, to her blighting slavery sold,  
 And watched it with such thoughts as must remain untold.

## XVIII

I watched, until the shades of evening wrapped 1261  
 Earth like an exhalation—then the bark  
 Moved, for that calm was by the sunset snapped.  
 It moved a speck upon the Ocean dark:

Soon the wan stars came forth, and I could mark 126½  
 Its path no more!—I sought to close mine eyes,  
 But like the balls, their lids were stiff and stark;  
 I would have risen, but ere that I could rise,  
 My parched skin was split with piercing agonies.

## XIX

I gnawed my brazen chain, and sought to sever 1270  
 Its adamantine links, that I might die:  
 O Liberty! forgive the base endeavour,  
 Forgive me, if, reserved for victory,  
 The Champion of thy faith e'er sought to fly.—  
 That starry night, with its clear silence, sent 1275  
 Tameless resolve which laughed at misery  
 Into my soul—linked remembrance lent  
 To that such power, to me such a severe content.

## XX

To breathe, to be, to hope, or to despair  
 And die, I questioned not; nor, though the Sun 128½  
 Its shafts of agony kindling through the air  
 Moved over me, nor though in evening dun,  
 Or when the stars their visible courses run,  
 Or morning, the wide universe was spread  
 In dreary calmness round me, did I shun 128½  
 Its presence, nor seek refuge with the dead  
 From one faint hope whose flower a dropping poison shed.

## XXI

Two days thus passed—I neither raved nor died—  
 Thirst raged within me, like a scorpion's nest  
 Built in mine entrails; I had spurned aside 129  
 The water-vessel, while despair possessed  
 My thoughts, and now no drop remained! The uprest  
 Of the third sun brought hunger—but the crust  
 Which had been left, was to my craving breast  
 Fuel, not food. I chewed the bitter dust, 129½  
 And bit my bloodless arm, and licked the brazen rust.

## XXII

My brain began to fail when the fourth morn  
 Burst o'er the golden isles—a fearful sleep,  
 Which through the caverns dreary and forlorn  
 Of the riven soul, sent its foul dreams to sweep 1300

With whirlwind swiftness—a fall far and deep,—  
 A gulf, a void, a sense of senselessness—  
 These things dwelt in me, even as shadows keep  
 Their watch in some dim charnel's loneliness,  
 A shoreless sea, a sky sunless and planetless! 1305



## XXIII

The forms which peopled this terrific trance  
 I well remember—like a choir of devils,  
 Around me they involved a giddy dance;  
 Legions seemed gathering from the misty levels  
 Of Ocean, to supply those ceaseless revels, 1310  
 Foul, ceaseless shadows:—thought could not divide  
 The actual world from these entangling evils,  
 Which so bemocked themselves, that I descried  
 All shapes like mine own self, hideously multiplied.

## XXIV

The sense of day and night, of false and true, 1315  
 Was dead within me. Yet two visions burst  
 That darkness—one, as since that hour I knew,  
 Was not a phantom of the realms accursed,  
 Where then my spirit dwelt—but of the first  
 I know not yet, was it a dream or no. 1320  
 But both, though not distincter, were immersed  
 In hues which, when through memory's waste they flow,  
 Make their divided streams more bright and rapid now.

## XXV

Methought that grate was lifted, and the seven  
 Who brought me thither four stiff corpses bare, 1325  
 And from the frieze to the four winds of Heaven  
 Hung them on high by the entangled hair:  
 Swarthy were three—the fourth was very fair:  
 As they retired, the golden moon upsprung,  
 And eagerly, out in the giddy air, 1330  
 Leaning that I might eat, I stretched and clung  
 Over the shapeless depth in which those corpses hung.

## XXVI

A woman's shape, now lank and cold and blue,  
 The dwelling of the many-coloured worm,  
 Hung there; the white and hollow cheek I drew 1335  
 To my dry lips—what radiance did inform

Those horny eyes? whose was that withered form?  
 Alas, alas! it seemed that Cythna's ghost  
 Laughed in those looks, and that the flesh was warm  
 Within my teeth!—A whirlwind keen as frost 1340  
 Then in its sinking gulfs my sickening spirit tossed.

## XXVII

Then seemed it that a tameless hurricane  
 Arose, and bore me in its dark career  
 Beyond the sun, beyond the stars that wane  
 On the verge of formless space—it languished there, 1345  
 And dying, left a silence lone and drear,  
 More horrible than famine:—in the deep  
 The shape of an old man did then appear,  
 Stately and beautiful; that dreadful sleep  
 His heavenly smiles dispersed, and I could wake and weep.

## XXVIII

And, when the blinding tears had fallen, I saw 1351  
 That column, and those corpses, and the moon,  
 And felt the poisonous tooth of hunger gnaw  
 My vitals, I rejoiced, as if the boon  
 Of senseless death would be accorded soon;— 1355  
 When from that stony gloom a voice arose,  
 Solemn and sweet as when low winds attune  
 The midnight pines; the grate did then uncloze,  
 And on that reverend form the moonlight did repose.

## XXIX

He struck my chains, and gently spake and smiled: 1360  
 As they were loosened by that Hermit old,  
 Mine eyes were of their madness half beguiled,  
 To answer those kind looks—he did enfold  
 His giant arms around me, to uphold  
 My wretched frame, my scorched limbs he wound 1365  
 In linen moist and balmy, and as cold  
 As dew to drooping leaves;—the chain, with sound  
 Like earthquake, through the chasm of that steep stair did bound,

## XXX

As, lifting me, it fell!—What next I heard, 1370  
 Were billows leaping on the harbour-bar,  
 And the shrill sea-wind, whose breath idly stirred  
 My hair;—I looked abroad, and saw a star

Shining beside a sail, and distant far  
 That mountain and its column, the known mark  
 Of those who in the wide deep wandering are, 1375  
 So that I feared some Spirit, fell and dark,  
 In trance had lain me thus within a fiendish bark.

## XXXI

For now indeed, over the salt sea-billow  
 I sailed: yet dared not look upon the shape  
 Of him who ruled the helm, although the pillow 1380  
 For my light head was hollowed in his lap,  
 And my bare limbs his mantle did enwrap,  
 Fearing it was a fiend: at last, he bent  
 O'er me his aged face, as if to snap  
 Those dreadful thoughts the gentle grandsire bent, 1385  
 And to my inmost soul his soothing looks he sent.

## XXXII

A soft and healing potion to my lips  
 At intervals he raised—now looked on high,  
 To mark if yet the starry giant dips  
 His zone in the dim sea—now cheeringly, 1390  
 Though he said little, did he speak to me.  
 'It is a friend beside thee—take good cheer,  
 Poor victim, thou art now at liberty!'  
 I joyed as those a human tone to hear,  
 Who in cells deep and lone have languished many a year.

## XXXIII

A dim and feeble joy, whose glimpses oft 1396  
 Were quenched in a relapse of wildering dreams,  
 Yet still methought we sailed, until aloft  
 The stars of night grew pallid, and the beams  
 Of morn descended on the ocean-streams, 1400  
 And still that aged man, so grand and mild,  
 Tended me, even as some sick mother seems  
 To hang in hope over a dying child,  
 Till in the azure East darkness again was piled.

## XXXIV

And then the night-wind steaming from the shore, 1405  
 Sent odours dying sweet across the sea,  
 And the swift boat the little waves which bore,  
 Were cut by its keen keel, though slanting;



Soon I could hear the leaves sigh, and could see  
 The myrtle-blossoms starring the dim grove,  
 As past the pebbly beach the boat did flee  
 On sidelong wing, into a silent cove,  
 Where ebon pines a shade under the starlight wove. 1410

## CANTO IV

## I

THE old man took the oars, and soon the bark  
 Smote on the beach beside a tower of stone; 1415  
 It was a crumbling heap, whose portal dark  
 With blooming ivy-trails was overgrown;  
 Upon whose floor the spangling sands were strown,  
 And rarest sea-shells, which the eternal flood,  
 Slave to the mother of the months, had thrown 1420  
 Within the walls of that gray tower, which stood  
 A changeling of man's art, nursed amid Nature's brood.

## II

When the old man his boat had anchored,  
 He wound me in his arms with tender care,  
 And very few, but kindly words he said, 1425  
 And bore me through the tower adown a stair,  
 Whose smooth descent some ceaseless step to wear  
 For many a year had fallen.—We came at last  
 To a small chamber, which with mosses rare  
 Was tapestried, where me his soft hands placed 1430  
 Upon a couch of grass and oak-leaves interlaced.

## III

The moon was darting through the lattices  
 Its yellow light, warm as the beams of day—  
 So warm, that to admit the dewy breeze,  
 The old man opened them; the moonlight lay 1435  
 Upon a lake whose waters wove their play  
 Even to the threshold of that lonely home:  
 Within was seen in the dim wavering ray  
 The antique sculptured roof, and many a tome  
 Whose lore had made that sage all that he had become.

## IV

The rock-built barrier of the sea was past,— 1441  
 And I was on the margin of a lake,  
 A lonely lake, amid the forests vast  
 And snowy mountains:—did my spirit wake

From sleep as many-coloured as the snake 1445  
 That girds eternity? in life and truth,  
 Might not my heart its cravings ever slake?  
 Was Cythna then a dream, and all my youth,  
 And all its hopes and fears, and all its joy and ruth?

## V

Thus madness came again,—a milder madness, 1450  
 Which darkened nought but time's unquiet flow  
 With supernatural shades of clinging sadness;  
 That gentle Hermit, in my helpless woe,  
 By my sick couch was busy to and fro,  
 Like a strong spirit ministrant of good: 1455  
 When I was healed, he led me forth to show  
 The wonders of his sylvan solitude,  
 And we together sate by that isle-fretted flood.

## VI

He knew his soothing words to weave with skill  
 From all my madness told; like mine own heart, 1460  
 Of Cythna would he question me, until  
 That thrilling name had ceased to make me start,  
 From his familiar lips—it was not art,  
 Of wisdom and of justice when he spoke—  
 When mid soft looks of pity, there would dart 1465  
 A glance as keen as is the lightning's stroke  
 When it doth rive the knots of some ancestral oak.

## VII

Thus slowly from my brain the darkness rolled,  
 My thoughts their due array did re-assume  
 Through the enchantments of that Hermit old; 1470  
 Then I bethought me of the glorious doom  
 Of those who sternly struggle to relume  
 The lamp of Hope o'er man's bewildered lot,  
 And, sitting by the waters, in the gloom  
 Of eve, to that friend's heart I told my thought— 1475  
 That heart which had grown old, but had corrupted not.

## VIII

That hoary man had spent his livelong age  
 In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp  
 Of ever-burning thoughts on many a page,  
 When they are gone into the senseless damp 1480

Of graves;—his spirit thus became a lamp  
 Of splendour, like to those on which it fed:  
 Through peopled haunts, the City and the Camp,  
 Deep thirst for knowledge had his footsteps led,  
 And all the ways of men among mankind he read. 1485

## IX

But custom maketh blind and obdurate  
 The loftiest hearts:—he had beheld the woe  
 In which mankind was bound, but deemed that fate  
 Which made them abject, would preserve them so;  
 And in such faith, some steadfast joy to know, 1490  
 He sought this cell: but when fame went abroad,  
 That one in Argolis did undergo  
 Torture for liberty, and that the crowd  
 High truths from gifted lips had heard and understood;

## X

And that the multitude was gathering wide,— 1495  
 His spirit leaped within his aged frame,  
 In lonely peace he could no more abide,  
 But to the land on which the victor's flame  
 Had fed, my native land, the Hermit came:  
 Each heart was there a shield, and every tongue 1500  
 Was as a sword, of truth—young Laon's name  
 Rallied their secret hopes, though tyrants sung  
 Hymns of triumphant joy our scattered tribes among.

## XI

He came to the lone column on the rock,  
 And with his sweet and mighty eloquence 1505  
 The hearts of those who watched it did unlock,  
 And made them melt in tears of penitence.  
 They gave him entrance free to bear me thence.  
 'Since this,' the old man said, 'seven years are spent,  
 While slowly truth on thy benighted sense 1510  
 Has crept; the hope which wildered it has lent  
 Meanwhile, to me the power of a sublime intent.

## XII

'Yes, from the records of my youthful state,  
 And from the lore of bards and sages old,  
 From whatsoe'er my wakened thoughts create 1515  
 Out of the hopes of thine aspirings bold,

Have I collected language to unfold  
 Truth to my countrymen; from shore to shore  
 Doctrines of human power my words have told,  
 They have been heard, and men aspire to more 1520  
 Than they have ever gained or ever lost of yore.

## XIII

'In secret chambers parents read, and weep,  
 My writings to their babes, no longer blind;  
 And young men gather when their tyrants sleep,  
 And vows of faith each to the other bind; 1525  
 And marriageable maidens, who have pined  
 With love, till life seemed melting through their look,  
 A warmer zeal, a nobler hope now find;  
 And every bosom thus is rapt and shook,  
 Like autumn's myriad leaves in one swoln mountain-brook.

## XIV

'The tyrants of the Golden City tremble 1531  
 At voices which are heard about the streets,  
 The ministers of fraud can scarce dissemble  
 The lies of their own heart; but when one meets  
 Another at the shrine, he inly weets, 1535  
 Though he says nothing, that the truth is known;  
 Murderers are pale upon the judgement-seats,  
 And gold grows vile even to the wealthy crone,  
 And laughter fills the Fane, and curses shake the Throne.

## XV

'Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds 1540  
 Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law  
 Of mild equality and peace, succeeds  
 To faiths which long have held the world in awe,  
 Bloody and false, and cold:—as whirlpools draw 1545  
 All wrecks of Ocean to their chasm, the sway  
 Of thy strong genius, Laon, which foresaw  
 This hope, compels all spirits to obey,  
 Which round thy secret strength now throng in wide array.

## XVI

'For I have been thy passive instrument'—  
 (As thus the old man spake, his countenance 1550  
 Gleamed on me like a spirit's)—'thou hast lent  
 To me, to all, the power to advance

Towards this unforeseen deliverance  
 From our ancestral chains—ay, thou didst rear  
 That lamp of hope on high, which time nor chance 1555  
 Nor change may not extinguish, and my share  
 Of good, was o'er the world its gathered beams to bear.

## XVII

'But I, alas! am both unknown and old,  
 And though the woof of wisdom I know well  
 To dye in hues of language, I am cold 1560  
 In seeming, and the hopes which inly dwell,  
 My manners note that I did long repel;  
 But Laon's name to the tumultuous throng  
 Were like the star whose beams the waves compel  
 And tempests, and his soul-subduing tongue 1565  
 Were as a lance to quell the mailèd crest of wrong.

## XVIII

'Perchance blood need not flow, if thou at length  
 Wouldst rise, perchance the very slaves would spare  
 Their brethren and themselves; great is the strength 1570  
 Of words—for lately did a maiden fair,  
 Who from her childhood has been taught to bear  
 The tyrant's heaviest yoke, arise, and make  
 Her sex the law of truth and freedom hear,  
 And with these quiet words—"For thine own sake  
 I prithee spare me;"—did with ruth so take 1575

## XIX

'All hearts, that even the torturer who had bound  
 Her meek calm frame, ere it was yet impaled,  
 Loosened her, weeping then; nor could be found  
 One human hand to harm her—unassailed  
 Therefore she walks through the great City, veiled 1580  
 In virtue's adamantine eloquence,  
 'Gainst scorn, and death and pain thus trebly mailed,  
 And blending, in the smiles of that defence,  
 The Serpent and the Dove, Wisdom and Innocence.

## XX

'The wild-eyed women throng around her path: 1585  
 From their luxurious dungeons, from the dust  
 Of meaner thralls, from the oppressor's wrath,  
 Or the caresses of his sated lust

They congregate:—in her they put their trust;  
 The tyrants send their armèd slaves to quell 1590  
 Her power;—they, even like a thunder-gust  
 Caught by some forest, bend beneath the spell  
 Of that young maiden's speech, and to their chiefs rebel.

## XXI

'Thus she doth equal laws and justice teach  
 To woman, outraged and polluted long; 1595  
 Gathering the sweetest fruit in human reach  
 For those fair hands now free, while armèd wrong  
 Trembles before her look, though it be strong;  
 Thousands thus dwell beside her, virgins bright,  
 And matrons with their babes, a stately throng! 1600  
 Lovers renew the vows which they did plight  
 In early faith, and hearts long parted now unite,

## XXII

'And homeless orphans find a home near her,  
 And those poor victims of the proud, no less,  
 Fair wrecks, on whom the smiling world with stir, 1605  
 Thrusts the redemption of its wickedness:—  
 In squalid huts, and in its palaces  
 Sits Lust alone, while o'er the land is borne  
 Her voice, whose awful sweetness doth repress  
 All evil, and her foes relenting turn, 1610  
 And cast the vote of love in hope's abandoned urn.

## XXIII

'So in the populous City, a young maiden  
 Has baffled Havoc of the prey which he  
 Marks as his own, whene'er with chains o'erladen  
 Men make them arms to hurl down tyranny,— 1615  
 False arbiter between the bound and free;  
 And o'er the land, in hamlets and in towns  
 The multitudes collect tumultuously,  
 And throng in arms; but tyranny disowns  
 Their claim, and gathers strength around its trembling  
 thrones. 1620

## XXIV

'Blood soon, although unwillingly, to shed,  
 The free cannot forbear—the Queen of Slaves,  
 The hoodwinked Angel of the blind and dead,  
 Custom, with iron mace points to the graves

Where her own standard desolately waves  
 Over the dust of Prophets and of Kings.  
 Many yet stand in her array—"she paves  
 Her path with human hearts," and o'er it flings  
 The wildering gloom of her immeasurable wings.

1625

## XXV

'There is a plain beneath the City's wall,  
 Bounded by misty mountains, wide and vast,  
 Millions there lift at Freedom's thrilling call  
 Ten thousand standards wide, they load the blast  
 Which bears one sound of many voices past,  
 And startles on his throne their sceptred foe:  
 He sits amid his idle pomp aghast,  
 And that his power hath passed away, doth know—  
 Why pause the victor swords to seal his overthrow?

1630

1635

## XXVI

'The tyrant's guards resistance yet maintain:  
 Fearless, and fierce, and hard as beasts of blood,  
 They stand a speck amid the peopled plain;  
 Carnage and ruin have been made their food  
 From infancy—ill has become their good,  
 And for its hateful sake their will has wove  
 The chains which eat their hearts—the multitude  
 Surrounding them, with words of human love,  
 Seek from their own decay their stubborn minds to move.

1640

1645

## XXVII

'Over the land is felt a sudden pause,  
 As night and day those ruthless bands around,  
 The watch of love is kept:—a trance which awes  
 The thoughts of men with hope—as, when the sound  
 Of whirlwind, whose fierce blasts the waves and clouds con-  
 found,  
 Dies suddenly, the mariner in fear  
 Feels silence sink upon his heart—thus bound,  
 The conquerors pause, and oh! may freemen ne'er  
 Clasp the relentless knees of Dread the murderer!

1650

1655

## XXVIII

'If blood be shed, 'tis but a change and choice  
 Of bonds,—from slavery to cowardice  
 A wretched fall!—Uplift thy charmed voice!  
 Pour on those evil men the love that lies

1660

Hovering within those spirit-soothing eyes—  
 Arise, my friend, farewell!—As thus he spake,  
 From the green earth lightly I did arise,  
 As one out of dim dreams that doth awake,  
 And looked upon the depth of that reposing lake. 1665

## XXIX

I saw my countenance reflected there;—  
 And then my youth fell on me like a wind  
 Descending on still waters—my thin hair  
 Was prematurely gray, my face was lined  
 With channels, such as suffering leaves behind, 1670  
 Not age; my brow was pale, but in my cheek  
 And lips a flush of gnawing fire did find  
 Their food and dwelling; though mine eyes might speak  
 A subtle mind and strong within a frame thus weak.

## XXX

And though their lustre now was spent and faded, 1675  
 Yet in my hollow looks and withered mien  
 The likeness of a shape for which was braided  
 The brightest woof of genius, still was seen—  
 One who, methought, had gone from the world's scene,  
 And left it vacant—'twas her lover's face— 1680  
 It might resemble her—it once had been  
 The mirror of her thoughts, and still the grace  
 Which her mind's shadow cast, left there a lingering trace.

## XXXI

What then was I? She slumbered with the dead.  
 Glory and joy and peace, had come and gone. 1685  
 Doth the cloud perish, when the beams are fled  
 Which steeped its skirts in gold? or, dark and lone,  
 Doth it not through the paths of night unknown,  
 On outspread wings of its own wind upborne  
 Pour rain upon the earth? The stars are shown, 1690  
 When the cold moon sharpens her silver horn  
 Under the sea, and make the wide night not forlorn.

## XXXII

Strengthened in heart, yet sad, that aged man  
 I left, with interchange of looks and tears,  
 And lingering speech, and to the Camp began 1695  
 My way. O'er many a mountain-chain which rears



Its hundred crests aloft, my spirit bears  
 My frame: o'er many a dale and many a moor,  
 And gaily now meseems serene earth wears  
 The blosmy spring's star-bright investiture,  
 A vision which aught sad from sadness might allure.

## XXXIII

My powers revived within me, and I went  
 As one whom winds waft o'er the hending grass,  
 Through many a vale of that broad continent.  
 At night when I reposed, fair dreams did pass  
 Before my pillow;—my own Cythna was,  
 Not like a child of death, among them ever;  
 When I arose from rest, a woful mass  
 That gentlest sleep seemed from my life to sever,  
 As if the light of youth were not withdrawn for ever.

## XXXIV

Aye as I went, that maiden who had reared  
 The torch of Truth afar, of whose high deeds  
 The Hermit in his pilgrimage had heard,  
 Haunted my thoughts.—Ah, Hope its sickness feeds  
 With whatso'er it finds, or flowers or weeds!  
 Could she be Cythna?—Was that corpse a shade  
 Such as self-torturing thought from madness breeds?  
 Why was this hope not torture? Yet it made  
 A light around my steps which would not ever fade.

## CANTO V

## I

OVER the utmost hill at length I sped,  
 A snowy steep:—the moon was hanging low  
 Over the Asian mountains, and outspread  
 The plain, the City, and the Camp below,  
 Skirted the midnight Ocean's glimmering flow;  
 The City's moonlit spires and myriad lamps,  
 Like stars in a sublunar sky did glow,  
 And fires blazed far amid the scattered camps,  
 Like springs of flame, which burst where'er swift Earthquake  
 stamps.

## II

All slept but those in watchful arms who stood,  
 And those who sate tending the beacon's light,  
 And the few sounds from that vast multitude  
 Made silence more profound.—Oh, what a might

Of human thought was cradled in that night!  
 How many hearts impenetrably veiled  
 Beat underneath its shade, what secret fight 1735  
 Evil and good, in woven passions mailed,  
 Waged through that silent throng; a war that never failed!

## III

And now the Power of Good held victory,  
 So, through the labyrinth of many a tent,  
 Among the silent millions who did lie 1740  
 In innocent sleep, exultingly I went;  
 The moon had left Heaven desert now, but lent  
 From eastern morn the first faint lustre showed  
 An armèd youth—over his spear he bent  
 His downward face.—‘A friend!’ I cried aloud, 1745  
 And quickly common hopes made freemen understood.

## IV

I sate beside him while the morning beam  
 Crept slowly over Heaven, and talked with him  
 Of those immortal hopes, a glorious theme!  
 Which led us forth, until the stars grew dim: 1750  
 And all the while, methought, his voice did swim  
 As if it drownèd in remembrance were  
 Of thoughts which make the moist eyes overbrim:  
 At last, when daylight ’gan to fill the air,  
 He looked on me, and cried in wonder—‘Thou art here!’ 1755

## V

Then, suddenly, I knew it was the youth  
 In whom its earliest hopes my spirit found;  
 But envious tongues had stained his spotless truth,  
 And thoughtless pride his love in silence bound,  
 And shame and sorrow mine in toils had wound, 1760  
 Whilst he was innocent, and I deluded;  
 The truth now came upon me, on the ground  
 Tears of repenting joy, which fast intruded,  
 Fell fast, and o’er its peace our mingling spirits brooded.

## VI

Thus, while with rapid lips and earnest eyes 1765  
 We talked, a sound of sweeping conflict spread  
 As from the earth did suddenly arise;  
 From every tent roused by that clamour dread,

Our bands outsprung and seized their arms—we sped  
 Towards the sound: our tribes were gathering far. 1770  
 Those sanguine slaves amid ten thousand dead  
 Stabbed in their sleep, trampled in treacherous war  
 The gentle hearts whose power their lives had sought to spare.

## VII

Like rabid snakes, that sting some gentle child  
 Who brings them food, when winter false and fair 1775  
 Allures them forth with its cold smiles, so wild  
 They rage among the camp;—they overbear  
 The patriot hosts—confusion, then despair  
 Descends like night—when ‘Laon!’ one did cry:  
 Like a bright ghost from Heaven that shout did scare  
 The slaves, and widening through the vaulted sky, 1781  
 Seemed sent from Earth to Heaven in sign of victory.

## VIII

In sudden panic those false murderers fled,  
 Like insect tribes before the northern gale:  
 But swifter still, our hosts encompassed 1785  
 Their shattered ranks, and in a craggy vale,  
 Where even their fierce despair might nought avail,  
 Hemmed them around!—and then revenge and fear  
 Made the high virtue of the patriots fail:  
 One pointed on his foe the mortal spear— 1790  
 I rushed before its point, and cried, ‘Forbear, forbear!’

## IX

The spear transfixed my arm that was uplifted  
 In swift expostulation, and the blood  
 Gushed round its point: I smiled, and—‘Oh! thou gifted  
 With eloquence which shall not be withstood, 1795  
 Flow thus!’—I cried in joy, ‘thou vital flood,  
 Until my heart be dry, ere thus the cause  
 For which thou wert aught worthy be subdued—  
 Ah, ye are pale,—ye weep,—your passions pause,—  
 ’Tis well! ye feel the truth of love’s benignant laws. 1800

## X

‘Soldiers, our brethren and our friends are slain.  
 Ye murdered them, I think, as they did sleep!  
 Alas, what have ye done? the slightest pain  
 Which ye might suffer, there were eyes to weep,

But ye have quenched them—there were smiles to steep  
 Your hearts in balm, but they are lost in woe; 1806  
 And those whom love did set his watch to keep  
 Around your tents, truth's freedom to bestow,  
 Ye stabbed as they did sleep—but they forgive ye now.

## XI

'Oh wherefore should ill ever flow from ill, 1810  
 And pain still keener pain for ever breed?  
 We all are brethren—even the slaves who kill  
 For hire, are men; and to avenge misdeed  
 On the misdoer, doth but Misery feed  
 With her own broken heart! O Earth, O Heaven! 1815  
 And thou, dread Nature, which to every deed  
 And all that lives or is, to be hath given,  
 Even as to thee have these done ill, and are forgiven!

## XII

'Join then your hands and hearts, and let the past  
 Be as a grave which gives not up its dead 1820  
 To evil thoughts.'—A film then overcast  
 My sense with dimness, for the wound, which bled  
 Freshly, swift shadows o'er mine eyes had shed.  
 When I awoke, I lay mid friends and foes,  
 And earnest countenances on me shed 1825  
 The light of questioning looks, whilst one did close  
 My wound with balmiest herbs, and soothed me to repose;

## XIII

And one whose spear had pierced me, leaned beside,  
 With quivering lips and humid eyes;—and all  
 Seemed like some brothers on a journey wide 1830  
 Gone forth, whom now strange meeting did befall  
 In a strange land, round one whom they might call  
 Their friend, their chief, their father, for assay  
 Of peril, which had saved them from the thrall  
 Of death, now suffering. Thus the vast array 1835  
 Of those fraternal bands were reconciled that day.

## XIV

Lifting the thunder of their acclamation,  
 Towards the City then the multitude,  
 And I among them, went in joy—a nation  
 Made free by love;—a mighty brotherhood 1840

Linked by a jealous interchange of good;  
 A glorious pageant, more magnificent  
 Than kingly slaves arrayed in gold and blood,  
 When they return from carnage, and are sent  
 In triumph bright beneath the populous battlement. 1845

## XV

Afar, the city-walls were thronged on high,  
 And myriads on each giddy turret clung,  
 And to each spire far lessening in the sky  
 Bright pennons on the idle winds were hung;  
 As we approached, a shout of joyance sprung 1850  
 At once from all the crowd, as if the vast  
 And peopled Earth its boundless skies among  
 The sudden clamour of delight had cast,  
 When from before its face some general wreck had passed.

## XVI

Our armies through the City's hundred gates 1855  
 Were poured, like brooks which to the rocky lair  
 Of some deep lake, whose silence them awaits,  
 Throng from the mountains when the storms are there  
 And, as we passed through the calm sunny air  
 A thousand flower-inwoven crowns were shed, 1860  
 The token flowers of truth and freedom fair,  
 And fairest hands bound them on many a head,  
 Those angels of love's heaven, that over all was spread.

## XVII

I trod as one tranced in some rapturous vision:  
 Those bloody bands so lately reconciled, 1865  
 Were, ever as they went, by the contrition  
 Of anger turned to love, from ill beguiled,  
 And every one on them more gently smiled,  
 Because they had done evil:—the sweet awe  
 Of such mild looks made their own hearts grow mild,  
 And did with soft attraction ever draw 1871  
 Their spirits to the love of freedom's equal law.

## XVIII

And they, and all, in one loud symphony  
 My name with Liberty commingling, lifted,  
 'The friend and the preserver of the free! 1875  
 The parent of this joy!' and fair eyes gifted

## S H E L L E Y

With feelings, caught from one who had uplifted  
 The light of a great spirit, round me shone;  
 And all the shapes of this grand scenery shifted  
 Like restless clouds before the steadfast sun,— 1880  
 Where was that Maid? I asked, but it was known of none.

## XIX

Laone was the name her love had chosen,  
 For she was nameless, and her birth none knew:  
 Where was Laone now?—The words were frozen  
 Within my lips with fear; but to subdue 1885  
 Such dreadful hope, to my great task was due,  
 And when at length one brought reply, that she  
 To-morrow would appear, I then withdrew  
 To judge what need for that great throng might be,  
 For now the stars came thick over the twilight sea. 1890

## XX

Yet need was none for rest or food to care,  
 Even though that multitude was passing great,  
 Since each one for the other did prepare  
 All kindly succour—Therefore to the gate  
 Of the Imperial House, now desolate, 1895  
 I passed, and there was found aghast, alone,  
 The fallen Tyrant!—Silently he sate  
 Upon the footstool of his golden throne,  
 Which, starred with sunny gems, in its own lustre shone.

## XXI

Alone, but for one child, who led before him 1900  
 A graceful dance: the only living thing  
 Of all the crowd, which thither to adore him  
 Flocked yesterday, who solace sought to bring  
 In his abandonment!—She knew the King  
 Had praised her dance of yore, and now she wove 1905  
 Its circles, aye weeping and murmuring  
 Mid her sad task of unregarded love,  
 That to no smiles it might his speechless sadness move.

## XXII

She fled to him, and wildly clasped his feet  
 When human steps were heard:—he moved nor spoke,  
 Nor changed his hue, nor raised his looks to meet 1911  
 The gaze of strangers—our loud entrance woke

The echoes of the hall, which circling broke  
 The calm of its recesses,—like a tomb  
 Its sculptured walls vacantly to the stroke  
 Of footfalls answered, and the twilight's gloom  
 Lay like a charnel's mist within the radiant dome. 1915

## XXIII

The little child stood up when we came nigh;  
 Her lips and cheeks seemed very pale and wan,  
 But on her forehead, and within her eye  
 Lay beauty, which makes hearts that feed thereon 1920  
 Sick with excess of sweetness; on the throne  
 She leaned;—the King, with gathered brow, and lips  
 Wreathed by long scorn, did inly sneer and frown  
 With hue like that when some great painter dips 1925  
 His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.

## XXIV

She stood beside him like a rainbow braided  
 Within some storm, when scarce its shadows vast  
 From the blue paths of the swift sun have faded;  
 A sweet and solemn smile, like Cythna's cast 1930  
 One moment's light, which made my heart beat fast,  
 O'er that child's parted lips—a gleam of bliss,  
 A shade of vanished days,—as the tears passed  
 Which wrapped it, even as with a father's kiss  
 I pressed those softest eyes in trembling tenderness. 1935

## XXV

The sceptred wretch then from that solitude  
 I drew, and, of his change compassionate,  
 With words of sadness soothed his rugged mood.  
 But he, while pride and fear held deep debate,  
 With sullen guile of ill-dissembled hate 1940  
 Glared on me as a toothless snake might glare:  
 Pity, not scorn I felt, though desolate  
 The desolator now, and unaware  
 The curses which he mocked had caught him by the hair.

## XXVI

I led him forth from that which now might seem 1945  
 A gorgeous grave: through portals sculptured deep  
 With imagery beautiful as dream  
 We went, and left the shades which tend on sleep

Over its unregarded gold to keep  
 Their silent watch.—The child trod faintly,  
 And as she went, the tears which she did weep  
 Glanced in the starlight; wildered seemed she,  
 And when I spake, for sobs she could not answer me. 1950

## XXVII

At last the tyrant cried, 'She hungers, slave,  
 Stab her, or give her bread!'—It was a tone 1955  
 Such as sick fancies in a new-made grave  
 Might hear. I trembled, for the truth was known;  
 He with this child had thus been left alone,  
 And neither had gone forth for food,—but he  
 In mingled pride and awe cowered near his throne,  
 And she a nursling of captivity 1961  
 Knew nought beyond those walls, nor what such change might be.

## XXVIII

And he was troubled at a charm withdrawn  
 Thus suddenly; that sceptres ruled no more—  
 That even from gold the dreadful strength was gone, 1965  
 Which once made all things subject to its power—  
 Such wonder seized him, as if hour by hour  
 The past had come again; and the swift fall  
 Of one so great and terrible of yore,  
 To desolateness, in the hearts of all 1970  
 Like wonder stirred, who saw such awful change befall.

## XXIX

A mighty crowd, such as the wide land pours  
 Once in a thousand years, now gathered round  
 The fallen tyrant;—like the rush of showers  
 Of hail in spring, pattering along the ground, 1975  
 Their many footsteps fell, else came no sound  
 From the wide multitude: that lonely man  
 Then knew the burden of his change, and found,  
 Concealing in the dust his visage wan,  
 Refuge from the keen looks which through his bosom ran.

## XXX

And he was faint withal: I sate beside him 1981  
 Upon the earth, and took that child so fair  
 From his weak arms, that ill might none betide him  
 Or her;—when food was brought to them, her share



To his averted lips the child did bear, 1985  
 But, when she saw he had enough, she ate  
 And wept the while;—the lonely man's despair  
 Hunger then overcame, and of his state  
 Forgetful, on the dust as in a trance he sate.

## XXXI

Slowly the silence of the multitudes 1990  
 Passed, as when far is heard in some lone dell  
 The gathering of a wind among the woods—  
 'And he is fallen!' they cry, 'he who did dwell  
 Like famine or the plague, or aught more fell  
 Among our homes, is fallen! the murderer 1995  
 Who slaked his thirsting soul as from a well  
 Of blood and tears with ruin! he is here!  
 Sunk in a gulf of scorn from which none may him rear!'

## XXXII

Then was heard—'He who judged let him be brought  
 To judgement! blood for blood cries from the soil 2000  
 On which his crimes have deep pollution wrought!  
 Shall Othman only unavenged despoil?  
 Shall they who by the stress of grinding toil  
 Wrest from the unwilling earth his luxuries,  
 Perish for crime, while his foul blood may boil, 2005  
 Or creep within his veins at will?—Arise!  
 And to high justice make her chosen sacrifice.'

## XXXIII

'What do ye seek? what fear ye,' then I cried,  
 Suddenly starting forth, 'that ye should shed  
 The blood of Othman?—if your hearts are tried 2010  
 In the true love of freedom, cease to dread  
 This one poor lonely man—beneath Heaven spread  
 In purest light above us all, through earth  
 Maternal earth, who doth her sweet smiles shed  
 For all, let him go free; until the worth 2015  
 Of human nature win from these a second birth.

## XXXIV

'What call ye *justice*? Is there one who ne'er  
 In secret thought has wished another's ill?—  
 Are ye all pure? Let those stand forth who hear,  
 And tremble not. Shall they insult and kill, 2020

If such they be? their mild eyes can they fill  
 With the false anger of the hypocrite?  
 Alas, such were not pure,—the chastened will  
 Of virtue sees that justice is the light  
 Of love, and not revenge, and terror and despite.' 2025

## XXXV

The murmur of the people, slowly dying,  
 Paused as I spake, then those who near me were,  
 Cast gentle looks where the lone man was lying  
 Shrouding his head, which now that infant fair  
 Clasped on her lap in silence;—through the air 2030  
 Sobs were then heard, and many kissed my feet  
 In pity's madness, and to the despair  
 Of him whom late they cursed, a solace sweet  
 His very victims brought—soft looks and speeches meet.

## XXXVI

Then to a home for his repose assigned, 2035  
 Accompanied by the still throng he went  
 In silence, where, to soothe his rankling mind,  
 Some likeness of his ancient state was lent;  
 And if his heart could have been innocent  
 As those who pardoned him, he might have ended 2040  
 His days in peace; but his straight lips were bent,  
 Men said, into a smile which guile portended,  
 A sight with which that child like hope with fear was blended.

## XXXVII

'Twas midnight now, the eve of that great day  
 Whereon the many nations at whose call 2045  
 The chains of earth like mist melted away,  
 Decreed to hold a sacred Festival,  
 A rite to attest the equality of all  
 Who live. So to their homes, to dream or wake  
 All went. The sleepless silence did recall 2050  
 Laone to my thoughts, with hopes that make  
 The flood recede from which their thirst they seek to slake.

## XXXVIII

The dawn flowed forth, and from its purple fountains  
 I drank those hopes which make the spirit quail,  
 As to the plain between the misty mountains 2055  
 And the great City, with a countenance pale

I went:—it was a sight which might avail  
 To make men weep exulting tears, for whom  
 Now first from human power the reverend veil  
 Was torn, to see Earth from her general womb  
 Pour forth her swarming sons to a fraternal doom: 2060

## XXXIX

To see, far glancing in the misty morning,  
 The signs of that innumerable host,  
 To hear one sound of many made, the warning  
 Of Earth to Heaven from its free children tossed, 2065  
 While the eternal hills, and the sea lost  
 In wavering light, and, starring the blue sky  
 The city's myriad spires of gold, almost  
 With human joy made mute society—  
 Its witnesses with men who must hereafter be. 2070

## XL

To see, like some vast island from the Ocean,  
 The Altar of the Federation rear  
 Its pile i' the midst; a work which the devotion  
 Of millions in one night created there,  
 Sudden, as when the moonrise makes appear 2075  
 Strange clouds in the east; a marble pyramid  
 Distinct with steps: that mighty shape did wear  
 The light of genius; its still shadow hid  
 Far ships: to know its height the morning mists forbid!

## XLI

To hear the restless multitudes for ever 2080  
 Around the base of that great Altar flow,  
 As on some mountain-islet burst and shiver  
 Atlantic waves; and solemnly and slow  
 As the wind bore that tumult to and fro,  
 To feel the dreamlike music, which did swim 2085  
 Like beams through floating clouds on waves below  
 Falling in pauses, from that Altar dim  
 As silver-sounding tongues breathed an aëreal hymn.

## XLII

To hear, to see, to live, was on that morn  
 Lethean joy! so that all those assembled 2090  
 Cast off their memories of the past outworn;  
 Two only bosoms with their own life trembled,

And mine was one,—and we had both dissembled;  
 So with a beating heart I went, and one,  
 Who having much, covets yet more, resembled; 2105  
 A lost and dear possession, which not won,  
 He walks in lonely gloom beneath the noonday sun.

## XLIII

To the great Pyramid I came: its stair  
 With female choirs was thronged: the loveliest  
 Among the free, grouped with its sculptures rare; 2100  
 As I approached, the morning's golden mist,  
 Which now the wonder-stricken breezes kissed  
 With their cold lips, fled, and the summit shone  
 Like Athos seen from Samothracia, dressed  
 In earliest light, by vintagers, and one 2105  
 Sate there, a female Shape upon an ivory throne:

## XLIV

A Form most like the imagined habitant  
 Of silver exhalations sprung from dawn,  
 By winds which feed on sunrise woven, to enchant  
 The faiths of men: all mortal eyes were drawn, 2110  
 As famished mariners through strange seas gone  
 Gaze on a burning watch-tower, by the light  
 Of those divinest lineaments—alone  
 With thoughts which none could share, from that fair sight  
 I turned in sickness, for a veil shrouded her countenance bright.

## XLV

And, neither did I hear the acclamations, 2116  
 Which from brief silence bursting, filled the air  
 With her strange name and mine, from all the nations  
 Which we, they said, in strength had gathered there  
 From the sleep of bondage; nor the vision fair 2120  
 Of that bright pageantry beheld,—but blind  
 And silent, as a breathing corpse did fare,  
 Leaning upon my friend, till like a wind  
 To fevered cheeks, a voice flowed o'er my troubled mind.

## XLVI

Like music of some minstrel heavenly-gifted, 2125  
 To one whom fiends enthral, this voice to me;  
 Scarce did I wish her veil to be uplifted,  
 I was so calm and joyous.—I could see

The platform where we stood, the statues three  
 Which kept their marble watch on that high shrine, 2130  
 The multitudes, the mountains, and the sea;  
 As when eclipse hath passed, things sudden shine  
 To men's astonished eyes most clear and crystalline.

## XLVII

At first Laone spoke most tremulously:  
 But soon her voice the calmness which it shed 2135  
 Gathered, and—'Thou art whom I sought to see,  
 And thou art our first votary here,' she said:  
 'I had a dear friend once, but he is dead!—  
 And of all those on the wide earth who breathe,  
 Thou dost resemble him alone—I spread 2140  
 This veil between us two, that thou beneath  
 Shouldst image one who may have been long lost in death.

## XLVIII

'For this wilt thou not henceforth pardon me?  
 Yes, but those joys which silence well requite  
 Forbid reply;—why men have chosen me 2145  
 To be the Priestess of this holiest rite  
 I scarcely know, but that the floods of light  
 Which flow over the world, have borne me hither  
 To meet thee, long most dear; and now unite  
 Thine hand with mine, and may all comfort wither 2150  
 From both the hearts whose pulse in joy now beat together,

## XLIX

'If our own will as others' law we bind,  
 If the foul worship trampled here we fear;  
 If as ourselves we cease to love our kind!—'  
 She paused, and pointed upwards—sculptured there 2155  
 Three shapes around her ivory throne appear;  
 One was a Giant, like a child asleep  
 On a loose rock, whose grasp crushed, as it were  
 In dream, sceptres and crowns; and one did keep  
 Its watchful eyes in doubt whether to smile or weep; 2160

## L

A Woman sitting on the sculptured disk  
 Of the broad earth, and feeding from one breast  
 A human babe and a young basilisk;  
 Her looks were sweet as Heaven's when loveliest

In Autumn eves. The third Image was dressed 2165  
 In white wings swift as clouds in winter skies;  
 Beneath his feet, 'mongst ghastliest forms, repressed  
 Lay Faith, an obscene worm, who sought to rise,  
 While calmly on the Sun he turned his diamond eyes.

## LI

Beside that Image then I sate, while she 2170  
 Stood, mid the throngs which ever ebbed and flowed,  
 Like light amid the shadows of the sea  
 Cast from one cloudless star, and on the crowd  
 That touch which none who feels forgets, bestowed;  
 And whilst the sun returned the steadfast gaze 2175  
 Of the great Image, as o'er Heaven it glode.  
 That rite had place; it ceased when sunset's blaze  
 Burned o'er the isles. All stood in joy and deep amaze—  
 —When in the silence of all spirits there  
 Laone's voice was felt, and through the air 2180  
 Her thrilling gestures spoke, most eloquently fair:—

## I

'Calm art thou as yon sunset! swift and strong  
 As new-fledged Eagles, beautiful and young,  
 That float among the blinding beams of morning;  
 And underneath thy feet writhe Faith, and Folly, 2185  
 Custom, and Hell, and mortal Melancholy—  
 Hark! the Earth starts to hear the mighty warning  
 Of thy voice sublime and holy;  
 Its free spirits here assembled,  
 See thee, feel thee, know thee now,— 2190  
 To thy voice their hearts have trembled  
 Like ten thousand clouds which flow  
 With one wide wind as it flies!—  
 Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise  
 To hail thee, and the elements they chain 2195  
 And their own will, to swell the glory of thy train.

## 2

'O Spirit vast and deep as Night and Heaven!  
 Mother and soul of all to which is given  
 The light of life, the loveliness of being,  
 Lo! thou dost re-ascend the human heart, 2200  
 Thy throne of power, almighty as thou wert  
 In dreams of Poets old grown pale by seeing  
 The shade of thee:—now, millions start

To feel thy lightnings through them burning:  
 Nature, or God, or Love, or Pleasure, 2205  
 Or Sympathy the sad tears turning  
 To mutual smiles, a drainless treasure,  
 Descends amidst us;—Scorn, and Hate,  
 Revenge and Selfishness are desolate—  
 A hundred nations swear that there shall be 2210  
 Pity and Peace and Love, among the good and free!

## 3

‘Eldest of things, divine Equality!  
 Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,  
 The Angels of thy sway, who pour around thee  
 Treasures from all the cells of human thought, 2215  
 And from the Stars, and from the Ocean brought,  
 And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee:  
 The powerful and the wise had sought  
 Thy coming, thou in light descending  
 O’er the wide land which is thine own 2220  
 Like the Spring whose breath is blending  
 All blasts of fragrance into one,  
 Comest upon the paths of men!—  
 Earth bares her general bosom to thy ken,  
 And all her children here in glory meet 2225  
 To feed upon thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.

## 4

‘My brethren, we are free! the plains and mountains,  
 The gray sea-shore, the forests and the fountains,  
 Are haunts of happiest dwellers;—man and woman,  
 Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow 2230  
 From lawless love a solace for their sorrow;  
 For oft we still must weep, since we are human.  
 A stormy night’s serenest morrow,  
 Whose showers are pity’s gentle tears,  
 Whose clouds are smiles of those that die 2235  
 Like infants without hopes or fears,  
 And whose beams are joys that lie  
 In blended hearts, now holds dominion;  
 The dawn of mind, which upwards on a pinion  
 Borne, swift as sunrise, far illumines space, 2240  
 And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace!

## 5

‘My brethren, we are free! The fruits are glowing  
 Beneath the stars, and the night winds are flowing

O'er the ripe corn, the birds and beasts are dreaming—  
 Never again may blood of bird or beast 2245  
 Stain with its venomous stream a human feast,  
 To the pure skies in accusation steaming;  
 Avenging poisons shall have ceased  
 To feed disease and fear and madness,  
 The dwellers of the earth and air 2250  
 Shall throng around our steps in gladness  
 Seeking their food or refuge there.  
 Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,  
 To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful,  
 And Science, and her sister Poesy, 2255  
 Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free!

## 6

'Victory, Victory to the prostrate nations!  
 Bear witness Night, and ye mute Constellations  
 Who gaze on us from your crystalline cars!  
 Thoughts have gone forth whose powers can sleep no more!  
 Victory! Victory! Earth's remotest shore, 2261  
 Regions which groan beneath the Antarctic stars,  
 The green lands cradled in the roar  
 Of western waves, and wildernesses  
 Peopled and vast, which skirt the oceans 2265  
 Where morning dyes her golden tresses,  
 Shall soon partake our high emotions:  
 Kings shall turn pale! Almighty Fear  
 The Fiend-God, when our charmed name he hear,  
 Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes, 2270  
 While Truth with Joy enthroned o'er his lost empire reigns!'

## LII

Ere she had ceased, the mists of night entwining  
 Their dim woof, floated o'er the infinite throng;  
 She, like a spirit through the darkness shining,  
 In tones whose sweetness silence did prolong, 2275  
 As if to lingering winds they did belong,  
 Poured forth her inmost soul: a passionate speech  
 With wild and thrilling pauses woven among,  
 Which whoso heard, was mute, for it could teach  
 To rapture like her own all listening hearts to reach. 2280

## LIII

Her voice was as a mountain-stream which sweeps  
 The withered leaves of Autumn to the lake,  
 And in some deep and narrow bay then sleeps  
 In the shadow of the shores; as dead leaves wake



# THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

103

Under the wave, in flowers and herbs which make 2285  
Those green depths beautiful when skies are blue,  
The multitude so moveless did partake  
Such living change, and kindling murmurs flew  
As o'er that speechless calm delight and wonder grew.

## LIV

Over the plain the throngs were scattered then 2290  
In groups around the fires, which from the sea  
Even to the gorge of the first mountain-glen  
Blazed wide and far: the banquet of the free  
Was spread beneath many a dark cypress-tree,  
Beneath whose spires, which swayed in the red flame, 2295  
Reclining, as they ate, of Liberty,  
And Hope, and Justice, and Laone's name,  
Earth's children did a woof of happy converse frame.

## LV

Their feast was such as Earth, the general mother,  
Pours from her fairest bosom, when she smiles 2300  
In the embrace of Autumn;—to each other  
As when some parent fondly reconciles  
Her warring children, she their wrath beguiles  
With her own sustenance; they relenting weep:  
Such was this Festival, which from their isles 2305  
And continents, and winds, and oceans deep,  
All shapes might throng to share, that fly, or walk, or creep,—

## LVI

Might share in peace and innocence, for gore  
Or poison none this festal did pollute,  
But piled on high, an overflowing store 2310  
Of pomegranates, and citrons, fairest fruit,  
Melons, and dates, and figs, and many a root  
Sweet and sustaining, and bright grapes ere yet  
Accursed fire their mild juice could transmute  
Into a mortal bane, and brown corn set 2315  
In baskets; with pure streams their thirsting lips they wet.

## LVII

Laone had descended from the shrine,  
And every deepest look and holiest mind  
Fed on her form, though now those tones divine  
Were silent as she passed; she did unwind 2320

## S H E L L E Y

Her veil, as with the crowds of her own kind  
 She mixed; some impulse made my heart refrain  
 From seeking her that night, so I reclined  
 Amidst a group, where on the utmost plain  
 A festal watchfire burned beside the dusky main. 2325

## LVIII

And joyous was our feast; pathetic talk,  
 And wit, and harmony of choral strains,  
 While far Orion o'er the waves did walk  
 That flow among the isles, held us in chains  
 Of sweet captivity, which none disdains 2330  
 Who feels: but when his zone grew dim in mist  
 Which clothes the Ocean's bosom, o'er the plains  
 The multitudes went homeward, to their rest,  
 Which that delightful day with its own shadow blessed.

## CANTO VI

## I

BESIDE the dimness of the glimmering sea, 2335  
 Weaving swift language from impassioned themes,  
 With that dear friend I lingered, who to me  
 So late had been restored, beneath the gleams  
 Of the silver stars; and ever in soft dreams  
 Of future love and peace sweet converse lapped 2340  
 Our willing fancies, till the pallid beams  
 Of the last watchfire fell, and darkness wrapped  
 The waves, and each bright chain of floating fire was snapped;

## II

And till we came even to the City's wall  
 And the great gate; then, none knew whence or why,  
 Disquiet on the multitudes did fall: 2346  
 And first, one pale and breathless passed us by,  
 And stared and spoke not;—then with piercing cry  
 A troop of wild-eyed women, by the shrieks  
 Of their own terror driven,—tumultuously 2350  
 Hither and thither hurrying with pale cheeks,  
 Each one from fear unknown a sudden refuge seeks—

## III

Then, rallying cries of treason and of danger  
 Resounded: and—'They come! to arms! to arms!  
 The Tyrant is amongst us, and the stranger 2355  
 Comes to enslave us in his name! to arms!'

In vain: for Panic, the pale fiend who charms  
 Strength to forswear her right, those millions swept  
 Like waves before the tempest—these alarms  
 Came to me, as to know their cause I leapt 2360  
 On the gate's turret, and in rage and grief and scorn I wept!

## IV

For to the North I saw the town on fire,  
 And its red light made morning pallid now,  
 Which burst over wide Asia;—louder, higher,  
 The yells of victory and the screams of woe 2365  
 I heard approach, and saw the throng below  
 Stream through the gates like foam-wrought waterfalls  
 Fed from a thousand storms—the fearful glow  
 Of bombs flares overhead—at intervals  
 The red artillery's bolt mangling among them falls. 2370

## V

And now the horsemen come—and all was done  
 Swifter than I have spoken—I beheld  
 Their red swords flash in the unrisen sun.  
 I rushed among the rout, to have repelled  
 That miserable flight—one moment quelled 2375  
 By voice and looks and eloquent despair,  
 As if reproach from their own hearts withheld  
 Their steps, they stood; but soon came pouring there  
 New multitudes, and did those rallied bands o'erbear.

## VI

I strove, as, drifted on some cataract 2380  
 By irresistible streams, some wretch might strive  
 Who hears its fatal roar:—the files compact  
 Whelmed me, and from the gate availed to drive  
 With quickening impulse, as each bolt did rive  
 Their ranks with bloodier chasm:—into the plain 2385  
 Disgorged at length the dead and the alive  
 In one dread mass, were parted, and the stain  
 Of blood, from mortal steel fell o'er the fields like rain.

## VII

For now the despot's bloodhounds with their prey  
 Unarmed and unaware, were gorging deep 2390  
 Their gluttony of death; the loose array  
 Of horsemen o'er the wide fields murdering sweep,

And with loud laughter for their tyrant reap  
 A harvest sown with other hopes, the while,  
 Far overhead, ships from Propontis keep 2395  
 A killing rain of fire:—when the waves smile  
 As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano-isle,

## VIII

Thus sudden, unexpected feast was spread  
 For the carrion-fowls of Heaven.—I saw the sight—  
 I moved—I lived—as o'er the heaps of dead, 2400  
 Whose stony eyes glared in the morning light  
 I trod;—to me there came no thought of flight,  
 But with loud cries of scorn which whoso heard  
 That dreaded death, felt in his veins the might  
 Of virtuous shame return, the crowd I stirred, 2405  
 And desperation's hope in many hearts recurred.

## IX

A band of brothers gathering round me, made,  
 Although unarmed, a steadfast front, and still  
 Retreating, with stern looks beneath the shade  
 Of gathered eyebrows, did the victors fill 2410  
 With doubt even in success; deliberate will  
 Inspired our growing troop, not overthrown  
 It gained the shelter of a grassy hill,  
 And ever still our comrades were hewn down,  
 And their defenceless limbs beneath our footsteps strown.

## X

Immovably we stood—in joy I found, 2416  
 Beside me then, firm as a giant pine  
 Among the mountain-vapours driven around,  
 The old man whom I loved—his eyes divine  
 With a mild look of courage answered mine, 2420  
 And my young friend was near, and ardently  
 His hand grasped mine a moment—now the line  
 Of war extended, to our rallying cry  
 As myriads flocked in love and brotherhood to die.

## XI

For ever while the sun was climbing Heaven 2425  
 The horseman hewed our unarmed myriads down  
 Safely, though when by thirst of carnage driven  
 Too near, those slaves were swiftly overthrown

# THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

107

By hundreds leaping on them:—flesh and bone  
 Soon made our ghastly ramparts; then the shaft 2430  
 Of the artillery from the sea was thrown  
 More fast and fiery, and the conquerors laughed  
 In pride to hear the wind our screams of torment waft.

## XII

For on one side alone the hill gave shelter,  
 So vast that phalanx of unconquered men, 2435  
 And there the living in the blood did welter  
 Of the dead and dying, which, in that green glen,  
 Like stifled torrents, made a plashy fen  
 Under the feet—thus was the butchery waged  
 While the sun clomb Heaven's eastern steep—but when  
 It 'gan to sink—a fiercer combat raged, 2441  
 For in more doubtful strife the armies were engaged.

## XIII

Within a cave upon the hill were found  
 A bundle of rude pikes, the instrument  
 Of those who war but on their native ground 2445  
 For natural rights: a shout of joyance sent  
 Even from our hearts the wide air pierced and rent,  
 As those few arms the bravest and the best  
 Seized, and each sixth, thus armed, did now present  
 A line which covered and sustained the rest, 2450  
 A confident phalanx, which the foe on every side invest.

## XIV

That onset turned the foes to flight almost;  
 But soon they saw their present strength, and knew  
 That coming night would to our resolute host  
 Bring victory; so dismounting, close they drew 2455  
 Their glittering files, and then the combat grew  
 Unequal but most horrible;—and ever  
 Our myriads, whom the swift bolt overthrew,  
 Or the red sword, failed like a mountain-river  
 Which rushes forth in foam to sink in sands for ever. 2460

## XV

Sorrow and shame, to see with their own kind  
 Our human brethren mix, like beasts of blood,  
 To mutual ruin armed by one behind  
 Who sits and scoffs!—That friend so mild and good,

Who like its shadow near my youth had stood, 2465  
 Was stabbed!—my old preserver's hoary hair  
 With the flesh clinging to its roots, was strewed  
 Under my feet!—I lost all sense or care,  
 And like the rest I grew desperate and unaware.

## XVI

The battle became ghastlier—in the midst 2470  
 I paused, and saw, how ugly and how fell  
 O Hate! thou art, even when thy life thou shedd'st  
 For love. The ground in many a little dell  
 Was broken, up and down whose steeps befell  
 Alternate victory and defeat, and there 2475  
 The combatants with rage most horrible  
 Strove, and their eyes started with cracking stare,  
 And impotent their tongues they lolled into the air,

## XVII

Flaccid and foamy, like a mad dog's hanging;  
 Want, and Moon-madness, and the pest's swift Bane 2480  
 When its shafts smite—while yet its bow is twanging—  
 Have each their mark and sign—some ghastly stain;  
 And this was thine, O War! of hate and pain  
 Thou loathèd slave. I saw all shapes of death  
 And ministered to many, o'er the plain 2485  
 While carnage in the sunbeam's warmth did seethe,  
 Till twilight o'er the east wove her serenest wreath.

## XVIII

The few who yet survived, resolute and firm  
 Around me fought. At the decline of day  
 Winding above the mountain's snowy term 2490  
 New banners shone: they quivered in the ray  
 Of the sun's unseen orb—ere night the array  
 Of fresh troops hemmed us in—of those brave bands  
 I soon survived alone—and now I lay  
 Vanquished and faint, the grasp of bloody hands 2495  
 I felt, and saw on high the glare of falling brands:

## XIX

When on my foes a sudden terror came,  
 And they fled, scattering—lo! with reinless speed  
 A black Tartarian horse of giant frame  
 Comes trampling over the dead, the living bleed 2500

Beneath the hoofs of that tremendous steed,  
 On which, like to an Angel, robed in white,  
 Sate one waving a sword;—the hosts recede  
 And fly, as through their ranks with awful might,  
 Sweeps in the shadow of eve that Phantom swift and bright;

## XX

And its path made a solitude.—I rose 2506  
 And marked its coming: it relaxed its course  
 As it approached me, and the wind that flows  
 Through night, bore accents to mine ear whose force  
 Might create smiles in death—the Tartar horse 2510  
 Paused, and I saw the shape its might which swayed,  
 And heard her musical pants, like the sweet source  
 Of waters in the desert, as she said,  
 ‘Mount with me, Laon, now!’—I rapidly obeyed.

## XXI

Then: ‘Away! away!’ she cried, and stretched her sword  
 As ’twere a scourge over the courser’s head, 2516  
 And lightly shook the reins.—We spake no word,  
 But like the vapour of the tempest fled  
 Over the plain; her dark hair was disspread  
 Like the pine’s locks upon the lingering blast; 2520  
 Over mine eyes its shadowy strings it spread  
 Fitfully, and the hills and streams fled fast,  
 As o’er their glimmering forms the steed’s broad shadow passed.

## XXII

And his hoofs ground the rocks to fire and dust,  
 His strong sides made the torrents rise in spray, 2525  
 And turbulence, as of a whirlwind’s gust  
 Surrounded us;—and still away! away!  
 Through the desert night we sped, while she alway  
 Gazed on a mountain which we neared, whose crest,  
 Crowned with a marble ruin, in the ray 2530  
 Of the obscure stars gleamed;—its rugged breast  
 The steed strained up, and then his impulse did arrest.

## XXIII

A rocky hill which overhung the Ocean:—  
 From that lone ruin, when the steed that panted  
 Paused, might be heard the murmur of the motion 2535  
 Of waters, as in spots for ever haunted

By the choicest winds of Heaven, which are enchanted  
 To music, by the wand of Solitude,  
 That wizzard wild, and the far tents implanted  
 Upon the plain, be seen by those who stood 2540  
 Thence marking the dark shore of Ocean's curvèd flood.

## XXIV

One moment these were heard and seen—another  
 Passed; and the two who stood beneath that night,  
 Each only heard, or saw, or felt the other;  
 As from the lofty steed she did alight, 2545  
 Cythna, (for, from the eyes whose deepest light  
 Of love and sadness made my lips feel pale  
 With influence strange of mournfullest delight,  
 My own sweet Cythna looked), with joy did quail,  
 And felt her strength in tears of human weakness fail. 2550

## XXV

And for a space in my embrace she rested,  
 Her head on my unquiet heart reposing,  
 While my faint arms her languid frame invested:  
 At length she looked on me, and half unclosing  
 Her tremulous lips, said: 'Friend, thy bands were losing 2556  
 The battle, as I stood before the King  
 In bonds.—I burst them then, and swiftly choosing  
 The time, did seize a Tartar's sword, and spring  
 Upon his horse, and, swift as on the whirlwind's wing,

## XXVI

'Have thou and I been borne beyond pursuer, 2560  
 And we are here.'—Then turning to the steed,  
 She pressed the white moon on his front with pure  
 And rose-like lips, and many a fragrant weed  
 From the green ruin plucked, that he might feed;—  
 But I to a stone seat that Maiden led, 2565  
 And kissing her fair eyes, said, 'Thou hast need  
 Of rest,' and I heaped up the courser's bed  
 In a green mossy nook, with mountain-flowers dispread.

## XXVII

Within that ruin, where a shattered portal  
 Looks to the eastern stars, abandoned now 2570  
 By man, to be the home of things immortal,  
 Memories, like awful ghosts which come and go,



And must inherit all he builds below,  
 When he is gone, a hall stood; o'er whose roof  
 Fair clinging weeds with ivy pale did grow, 2575  
 Claspings its gray rents with a verdurous woof,  
 A hanging dome of leaves, a canopy moon-proof.

## XXVIII

The autumnal winds, as if spell-bound, had made  
 A natural couch of leaves in that recess,  
 Which seasons none disturbed, but, in the shade 2580  
 Of flowering parasites, did Spring love to dress  
 With their sweet blooms the wintry loneliness  
 Of those dead leaves, shedding their stars, when'er  
 The wandering wind her nurslings might caress;  
 Whose intertwining fingers ever there 2585  
 Made music wild and soft that filled the listening air.

## XXIX

We know not where we go, or what sweet dream  
 May pilot us through caverns strange and fair  
 Of far and pathless passion, while the stream  
 Of life, our bark doth on its whirlpools bear, 2590  
 Spreading swift wings as sails to the dim air;  
 Nor should we seek to know, so the devotion  
 Of love and gentle thoughts be heard still there  
 Louder and louder from the utmost Ocean  
 Of universal life, attuning its commotion. 2595

## XXX

To the pure all things are pure! Oblivion wrapped  
 Our spirits, and the fearful overthrow  
 Of public hope was from our being snapped,  
 Though linked years had bound it there; for now 2600  
 A power, a thirst, a knowledge, which below  
 All thoughts, like light beyond the atmosphere,  
 Clothing its clouds with grace, doth ever flow,  
 Came on us, as we sate in silence there,  
 Beneath the golden stars of the clear azure air:—

## XXXI

In silence which doth follow talk that causes 2605  
 The baffled heart to speak with sighs and tears,  
 When wildering passion swalloweth up the pauses  
 Of inexpressive speech:—the youthful years

Which we together passed, their hopes and fears,  
 The blood itself which ran within our frames, 2610  
 That likeness of the features which endears  
 The thoughts expressed by them, our very names,  
 And all the wingèd hours which speechless memory claims,

## XXXII

Had found a voice—and ere that voice did pass,  
 The night grew damp and dim, and through a rent 2615  
 Of the ruin where we sate, from the morass,  
 A wandering Meteor by some wild wind sent,  
 Hung high in the green dome, to which it lent  
 A faint and pallid lustre; while the song  
 Of blasts, in which its blue hair quivering bent, 2620  
 Strewed strangest sounds the moving leaves among;  
 A wondrous light, the sound as of a spirit's tongue.

## XXXIII

The Meteor showed the leaves on which we sate,  
 And Cythna's glowing arms, and the thick ties  
 Of her soft hair, which bent with gathered weight 2625  
 My neck near hers, her dark and deepening eyes,  
 Which, as twin phantoms of one star that lies  
 O'er a dim well, move, though the star reposes,  
 Swam in our mute and liquid ecstasies,  
 Her marble brow, and eager lips, like roses, 2630  
 With their own fragrance pale, which Spring but half uncloses.

## XXXIV

The Meteor to its far morass returned:  
 The beating of our veins one interval  
 Made still; and then I felt the blood that burned  
 Within her frame, mingle with mine, and fall 2635  
 Around my heart like fire; and over all  
 A mist was spread, the sickness of a deep  
 And speechless swoon of joy, as might befall  
 Two disunited spirits when they leap  
 In union from this earth's obscure and fading sleep. 2640

## XXXV

Was it one moment that confounded thus  
 All thought, all sense, all feeling, into one  
 Unutterable power, which shielded us  
 Even from our own cold looks, when we had gone

Into a wide and wild oblivion  
 Of tumult and of tenderness? or now  
 Had ages, such as make the moon and sun,  
 The seasons, and mankind their changes know,  
 Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below?

2645

## XXXVI

I know not. What are kisses whose fire clasps  
 The failing heart in languishment, or limb  
 Twined within limb? or the quick dying gasps  
 Of the life meeting, when the faint eyes swim  
 Through tears of a wide mist boundless and dim,  
 In one caress? What is the strong control  
 Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb,  
 Where far over the world those vapours roll,  
 Which blend two restless frames in one reposing soul?

2650

2655

## XXXVII

It is the shadow which doth float unseen,  
 But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality,  
 Whose divine darkness fled not, from that green  
 And lone recess, where lapped in peace did lie  
 Our linkèd frames till, from the changing sky,  
 That night and still another day had fled;  
 And then I saw and felt. The moon was high,  
 And clouds, as of a coming storm, were spread  
 Under its orb,—loud winds were gathering overhead.

2660

2665

## XXXVIII

Cythna's sweet lips seemed lurid in the moon,  
 Her fairest limbs with the night wind were chill,  
 And her dark tresses were all loosely strewn  
 O'er her pale bosom:—all within was still,  
 And the sweet peace of joy did almost fill  
 The depth of her unfathomable look;—  
 And we sate calmly, though that rocky hill,  
 The waves contending in its caverns strook,  
 For they foreknew the storm, and the gray ruin shook.

2670

2675

## XXXIX

There we unheeding sate, in the communion  
 Of interchanged vows, which, with a rite  
 Of faith most sweet and sacred, stamped our union.—  
 Few were the living hearts which could unite

2680

Like ours, or celebrate a bridal-night  
 With such close sympathies, for they had sprung  
 From linkèd youth, and from the gentle might  
 Of earliest love, delayed and cherished long,  
 Which common hopes and fears made, like a tempest, strong.

XL

And such is Nature's law divine, that those 2686  
 Who grow together cannot choose but love,  
 If faith or custom do not interpose,  
 Or common slavery mar what else might move  
 All gentlest thoughts; as in the sacred grove 2690  
 Which shades the springs of Ethiopian Nile,  
 That living tree, which, if the arrowy dove  
 Strike with her shadow, shrinks in fear awhile,  
 But its own kindred leaves clasps while the sunbeams smile;

XLI

And clings to them, when darkness may dis sever 2695  
 The close caresses of all duller plants  
 Which bloom on the wide earth—thus we for ever  
 Were linked, for love had nursed us in the haunts  
 Where knowledge, from its secret source enchants  
 Young hearts with the fresh music of its springing, 2700  
 Ere yet its gathered flood feeds human wants,  
 As the great Nile feeds Egypt; ever flinging  
 Light on the woven boughs which o'er its waves are swinging.

XLII

The tones of Cythna's voice like echoes were  
 Of those far murmuring streams; they rose and fell,  
 Mixed with mine own in the tempestuous air,— 2706  
 And so we sate, until our talk befell  
 Of the late ruin, swift and horrible,  
 And how those seeds of hope might yet be sown,  
 Whose fruit is evil's mortal poison: well, 2710  
 For us, this ruin made a watch-tower lone,  
 But Cythna's eyes looked faint, and now two days were gone

XLIII

Since she had food:—therefore I did awaken  
 The Tartar steed, who, from his ebon mane  
 Soon as the clinging slumbers he had shaken, 2715  
 Bent his thin head to seek the brazen rein,

Following me obediently; with pain  
 Of heart, so deep and dread, that one caress,  
 When lips and heart refuse to part again  
 Till they have told their fill, could scarce express 2720  
 The anguish of her mute and fearful tenderness,

## XLIV

Cythna beheld me part, as I bestrode  
 That willing steed—the tempest and the night,  
 Which gave my path its safety as I rode  
 Down the ravine of rocks, did soon unite 2725  
 The darkness and the tumult of their might  
 Borne on all winds.—Far through the streaming rain  
 Floating at intervals the garments white  
 Of Cythna gleamed, and her voice once again  
 Came to me on the gust, and soon I reached the plain. 2730

## XLV

I dreaded not the tempest, nor did he  
 Who bore me, but his eyeballs wide and red  
 Turned on the lightning's cleft exultingly;  
 And when the earth beneath his tameless tread,  
 Shook with the sullen thunder, he would spread 2735  
 His nostrils to the blast, and joyously  
 Mock the fierce peal with neighings;—thus we sped  
 O'er the lit plain, and soon I could descry  
 Where Death and Fire had gorged the spoil of victory.

## XLVI

There was a desolate village in a wood 2740  
 Whose bloom-inwoven leaves now scattering fed  
 The hungry storm; it was a place of blood,  
 A heap of hearthless walls;—the flames were dead  
 Within those dwellings now,—the life had fled  
 From all those corpses now,—but the wide sky 2745  
 Flooded with lightning was ribbed overhead  
 By the black rafters, and around did lie  
 Women, and babes, and men, slaughtered confusedly.

## XLVII

Beside the fountain in the market-place  
 Dismounting, I beheld those corpses stare 2750  
 With horny eyes upon each other's face,  
 And on the earth and on the vacant air,

And upon me, close to the waters where  
 I stooped to slake my thirst;—I shrank to taste,  
 For the salt bitterness of blood was there; 2755  
 But tied the steed beside, and sought in haste  
 If any yet survived amid that ghastly waste.

## XLVIII

No living thing was there beside one woman,  
 Whom I found wandering in the streets, and she  
 Was withered from a likeness of aught human 2760  
 Into a fiend, by some strange misery:  
 Soon as she heard my steps she leaped on me,  
 And glued her burning lips to mine, and laughed  
 With a loud, long, and frantic laugh of glee,  
 And cried, 'Now, Mortal, thou hast deeply quaffed 2765  
 The Plague's blue kisses—soon millions shall pledge the  
 draught!

## XLIX

'My name is Pestilence—this bosom dry,  
 Once fed two babes—a sister and a brother—  
 When I came home, one in the blood did lie  
 Of three death-wounds—the flames had ate the other!  
 Since then I have no longer been a mother, 2771  
 But I am Pestilence;—hither and thither  
 I flit about, that I may slay and smother:—  
 All lips which I have kissed must surely wither,  
 But Death's—if thou art he, we'll go to work together! 2775

## L

'What seek'st thou here? The moonlight comes in flashes,—  
 The dew is rising dankly from the dell—  
 'Twill moisten her! and thou shalt see the gashes  
 In my sweet boy, now full of worms—but tell  
 First what thou seek'st.'—'I seek for food.'—'Tis well,  
 Thou shalt have food; Famine, my paramour, 2781  
 Waits for us at the feast—cruel and fell  
 Is Famine, but he drives not from his door  
 Those whom these lips have kissed, alone. No more, no more!'

## LI

As thus she spake, she grasped me with the strength 2785  
 Of madness, and by many a ruined hearth  
 She led, and over many a corpse:—at length  
 We came to a lone hut where on the earth

Which made its floor, she in her ghastly mirth  
 Gathering from all those homes now desolate, 2790  
 Had piled three heaps of loaves, making a dearth  
 Among the dead—round which she set in state  
 A ring of cold, stiff babes; silent and stark they sate.

## LII

She leaped upon a pile, and lifted high  
 Her mad looks to the lightning, and cried: 'Eat! 2795  
 Share the great feast—to-morrow we must die!'  
 And then she spurned the loaves with her pale feet,  
 Towards her bloodless guests;—that sight to meet,  
 Mine eyes and my heart ached, and but that she  
 Who loved me, did with absent looks defeat 2800  
 Despair, I might have raved in sympathy;  
 But now I took the food that woman offered me;

## LIII

And vainly having with her madness striven  
 If I might win her to return with me,  
 Departed. In the eastern beams of Heaven 2805  
 The lightning now grew pallid—rapidly,  
 As by the shore of the tempestuous sea  
 The dark steed bore me, and the mountain gray  
 Soon echoed to his hoofs, and I could see  
 Cythna among the rocks, where she alway 2810  
 Had sate, with anxious eyes fixed on the lingering day.

## LIV

And joy was ours to meet: she was most pale,  
 Famished, and wet and weary, so I cast  
 My arms around her, lest her steps should fail  
 As to our home we went, and thus embraced, 2815  
 Her full heart seemed a deeper joy to taste  
 Than e'er the prosperous know; the steed behind  
 Trod peacefully along the mountain waste:  
 We reached our home ere morning could unbind  
 Night's latest veil, and on our bridal-couch reclined. 2820

## LV

Her chilled heart having cherished in my bosom,  
 And sweetest kisses past, we two did share  
 Our peaceful meal:—as an autumnal blossom  
 Which spreads its shrunk leaves in the sunny air,

After cold showers, like rainbows woven there, 2825  
 Thus in her lips and cheeks the vital spirit  
 Mantled, and in her eyes, an atmosphere  
 Of health, and hope; and sorrow languished near it,  
 And fear, and all that dark despondence doth inherit.

## CANTO VII

## I

So we sate joyous as the morning ray 2830  
 Which fed upon the wrecks of night and storm  
 Now lingering on the winds; light airs did play  
 Among the dewy weeds, the sun was warm,  
 And we sate linked in the inwoven charm  
 Of converse and caresses sweet and deep, 2835  
 Speechless caresses, talk that might disarm  
 Time, though he wield the darts of death and sleep,  
 And those thrice mortal barbs in his own poison steep.

## II

I told her of my sufferings and my madness,  
 And how, awakened from that dreamy mood 2840  
 By Liberty's uprising, the strength of gladness  
 Came to my spirit in my solitude;  
 And all that now I was—while tears pursued  
 Each other down her fair and glistening cheek  
 Fast as the thoughts which fed them, like a flood 2845  
 From sunbright dales; and when I ceased to speak,  
 Her accents soft and sweet the pausing air did wake.

## III

She told me a strange tale of strange endurance,  
 Like broken memories of many a heart  
 Woven into one; to which no firm assurance, 2850  
 So wild were they, could her own faith impart.  
 She said that not a tear did dare to start  
 From the swoln brain, and that her thoughts were firm  
 When from all mortal hope she did depart,  
 Borne by those slaves across the Ocean's term, 2855  
 And that she reached the port without one fear infirm.

## IV

One was she among many there, the thralls  
 Of the cold Tyrant's cruel lust: and they  
 Laughed mournfully in those polluted halls;  
 But she was calm and sad, musing alway 2860



On loftiest enterprise, till on a day  
 The Tyrant heard her singing to her lute  
 A wild, and sad, and spirit-thrilling lay,  
 Like winds that die in wastes—one moment mute  
 The evil thoughts it made, which did his breast pollute. 2865

## V

Even when he saw her wondrous loveliness,  
 One moment to great Nature's sacred power  
 He bent, and was no longer passionless;  
 But when he bade her to his secret bower  
 Be borne, a loveless victim, and she tore 2870  
 Her locks in agony, and her words of flame  
 And mightier looks availed not; then he bore  
 Again his load of slavery, and became  
 A king, a heartless beast, a pageant and a name.

## VI

She told me what a loathsome agony 2875  
 Is that when selfishness mocks love's delight,  
 Foul as in dream's most fearful imagery  
 To dally with the mowing dead—that night  
 All torture, fear, or horror made seem light  
 Which the soul dreams or knows, and when the day 2880  
 Shone on her awful frenzy, from the sight  
 Where like a Spirit in fleshly chains she lay  
 Struggling, aghast and pale the Tyrant fled away.

## VII

Her madness was a beam of light, a power 2884  
 Which dawned through the rent soul; and words it gave,  
 Gestures, and looks, such as in whirlwinds bore  
 Which might not be withstood—whence none could save—  
 All who approached their sphere,—like some calm wave  
 Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms beneath;  
 And sympathy made each attendant slave 2890  
 Fearless and free, and they began to breathe  
 Deep curses, like the voice of flames far underneath.

## VIII

The King felt pale upon his noonday throne:  
 At night two slaves he to her chamber sent,—  
 One was a green and wrinkled eunuch, grown 2895  
 From human shape into an instrument

Of all things ill—distorted, bowed and bent.  
 The other was a wretch from infancy  
 Made dumb by poison; who nought knew or meant  
 But to obey: from the fire-isles came he, 2900  
 A diver lean and strong, of Oman's coral sea.

## IX

They bore her to a bark, and the swift stroke  
 Of silent rowers clove the blue moonlight seas,  
 Until upon their path the morning broke;  
 They anchored then, where, be there calm or breeze, 2905  
 The gloomiest of the drear Symplegades  
 Shakes with the sleepless surge;—the Ethiop there  
 Wound his long arms around her, and with knees  
 Like iron clasped her feet, and plunged with her  
 Among the closing waves out of the boundless air. 2910

## X

'Swift as an eagle stooping from the plain  
 Of morning light, into some shadowy wood,  
 He plunged through the green silence of the main,  
 Through many a cavern which the eternal flood  
 Had scooped, as dark lairs for its monster brood; 2915  
 And among mighty shapes which fled in wonder,  
 And among mightier shadows which pursued  
 His heels, he wound: until the dark rocks under  
 He touched a golden chain—a sound arose like thunder.

## XI

'A stunning clang of massive bolts redoubling 2920  
 Beneath the deep—a burst of waters driven  
 As from the roots of the sea, raging and bubbling:  
 And in that roof of crags a space was riven  
 Through which there shone the emerald beams of heaven,  
 Shot through the lines of many waves inwoven, 2925  
 Like sunlight through acacia woods at even,  
 Through which, his way the diver having cloven,  
 Passed like a spark sent up out of a burning oven.

## XII

'And then,' she said, 'he laid me in a cave  
 Above the waters, by that chasm of sea, 2930  
 A fountain round and vast, in which the wave  
 Imprisoned, boiled and leaped perpetually,

Down which, one moment resting, he did flee,  
Winning the adverse depth; that spacious cell  
Like an hupaithric temple wide and high, 2935  
Whose aëry dome is inaccessible,  
Was pierced with one round cleft through which the sunbeams  
fell.

## XIII

‘Below, the fountain’s brink was richly paven  
With the deep’s wealth, coral, and pearl, and sand  
Like spangling gold, and purple shells engraven 2940  
With mystic legends by no mortal hand,  
Left there, when thronging to the moon’s command,  
The gathering waves rent the Hesperian gate  
Of mountains, and on such bright floor did stand  
Columns, and shapes like statues, and the state 2945  
Of kingless thrones, which Earth did in her heart create.

## XIV

‘The fiend of madness which had made its prey  
Of my poor heart, was lulled to sleep awhile:  
There was an interval of many a day,  
And a sea-eagle brought me food the while, 2950  
Whose nest was built in that untrodden isle,  
And who, to be the gaoler had been taught  
Of that strange dungeon; as a friend whose smile  
Like light and rest at morn and even is sought 2954  
That wild bird was to me, till madness misery brought.

## XV

‘The misery of a madness slow and creeping,  
Which made the earth seem fire, the sea seem air,  
And the white clouds of noon which oft were sleeping,  
In the blue heaven so beautiful and fair,  
Like hosts of ghastly shadows hovering there; 2960  
And the sea-eagle looked a fiend, who bore  
Thy mangled limbs for food!—Thus all things were  
Transformed into the agony which I wore  
Even as a poisoned robe around my bosom’s core.

## XVI

‘Again I knew the day and night fast fleeing, 2965  
The eagle, and the fountain, and the air;  
Another frenzy came—there seemed a being  
Within me—a strange load my heart did bear.

As if some living thing had made its lair  
 Even in the fountains of my life:—a long 2970  
 And wondrous vision wrought from my despair,  
 Then grew, like sweet reality among  
 Dim visionary woes, an unreposing throng.

## XVII

'Methought I was about to be a mother—  
 Month after month went by, and still I dreamed 2975  
 That we should soon be all to one another,  
 I and my child; and still new pulses seemed  
 To beat beside my heart, and still I deemed  
 There was a babe within—and, when the rain  
 Of winter through the rifted cavern streamed, 2980  
 Methought, after a lapse of lingering pain,  
 I saw that lovely shape, which near my heart had lain.

## XVIII

'It was a babe, beautiful from its birth,—  
 It was like thee, dear love, its eyes were thine,  
 Its brow, its lips, and so upon the earth 2985  
 It laid its fingers, as now rest on mine  
 Thine own, beloved!—'twas a dream divine;  
 Even to remember how it fled, how swift,  
 How utterly, might make the heart repine,—  
 Though 'twas a dream.'—Then Cythna did uplift 2990  
 Her looks on mine, as if some doubt she sought to shift:

## XIX

A doubt which would not flee, a tenderness  
 Of questioning grief, a source of thronging tears:  
 Which having passed, as one whom sobs oppress  
 She spoke: 'Yes, in the wilderness of years 2995  
 Her memory, aye, like a green home appears;  
 She sucked her fill even at this breast, sweet love,  
 For many month. I had no mortal fears;  
 Methought I felt her lips and breath approve,—  
 It was a human thing which to my bosom clove. 3000

## XX

'I watched the dawn of her first smiles, and soon  
 When zenith-stars were trembling on the wave,  
 Or when the beams of the invisible moon,  
 Or sun, from many a prism within the cave

Their gem-born shadows to the water gave, 3005  
 Her looks would hunt them, and with outspread hand,  
 From the swift lights which might that fountain pave,  
 She would mark one, and laugh, when that command  
 Slighting, it lingered there, and could not understand.

## XXI

'Methought her looks began to talk with me; 3010  
 And no articulate sounds, but something sweet  
 Her lips would frame,—so sweet it could not be,  
 That it was meaningless; her touch would meet  
 Mine, and our pulses calmly flow and beat  
 In response while we slept; and on a day 3015  
 When I was happiest in that strange retreat,  
 With heaps of golden shells we two did play,—  
 Both infants, weaving wings for time's perpetual way.

## XXII

'Ere night, methought, her waning eyes were grown  
 Weary with joy, and tired with our delight, 3020  
 We, on the earth, like sister twins lay down  
 On one fair mother's bosom:—from that night  
 She fled;—like those illusions clear and bright,  
 Which dwell in lakes, when the red moon on high  
 Pause ere it wakens tempest;—and her flight, 3025  
 Though 'twas the death of brainless fantasy,  
 Yet smote my lonesome heart more than all misery.

## XXIII

'It seemed that in the dreary night, the diver  
 Who brought me thither, came again, and bore  
 My child away. I saw the waters quiver, 3030  
 When he so swiftly sunk, as once before;  
 Then morning came—it shone even as of yore,  
 But I was changed—the very life was gone  
 Out of my heart—I wasted more and more,  
 Day after day, and sitting there alone, 3035  
 Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

## XXIV

'I was no longer mad, and yet methought  
 My breasts were swoln and changed:—in every vein  
 The blood stood still one moment, while that thought  
 Was passing—with a gush of sickening pain 3040

# S H E L L E Y

It ebb'd even to its withered springs again:  
 When my wan eyes in stern resolve I turned  
 From that most strange delusion, which would fain  
 Have waked the dream for which my spirit yearned  
 With more than human love,—then left it unreturned. 3045

## XXV

'So now my reason was restored to me  
 I struggled with that dream, which, like a beast  
 Most fierce and beauteous, in my memory  
 Had made its lair, and on my heart did feast;  
 But all that cave and all its shapes, possessed 3050  
 By thoughts which could not fade, renewed each one  
 Some smile, some look, some gesture which had blessed  
 Me heretofore: I, sitting there alone,  
 Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

## XXVI

'Time passed, I know not whether months or years;  
 For day, nor night, nor change of seasons made 3056  
 Its note, but thoughts and unavailing tears:  
 And I became at last even as a shade,  
 A smoke, a cloud on which the winds have preyed,  
 Till it be thin as air; until, one even, 3060  
 A Nautilus upon the fountain played,  
 Spreading his azure sail where breath of Heaven  
 Descended not, among the waves and whirlpools driven.

## XXVII

'And, when the Eagle came, that lovely thing,  
 Oaring with rosy feet its silver boat, 3065  
 Fled near me as for shelter; on slow wing,  
 The Eagle, hovering o'er his prey did float;  
 But when he saw that I with fear did note  
 His purpose, proffering my own food to him,  
 The eager plumes subsided on his throat— 3070  
 He came where that bright child of sea did swim,  
 And o'er it cast in peace his shadow broad and dim.

## XXVIII

'This wakened me, it gave me human strength;  
 And hope, I knew not whence or wherefore, rose,  
 But I resumed my ancient powers at length; 3075  
 My spirit felt again like one of those

Like thine, whose fate it is to make the woes  
 Of humankind their prey—what was this cave?  
 Its deep foundation no firm purpose knows  
 Immutable, resistless, strong to save, 3080  
 Like mind while yet it mocks the all-devouring grave.

## XXIX

‘And where was Laon? might my heart be dead,  
 While that far dearer heart could move and be?  
 Or whilst over the earth the pall was spread,  
 Which I had sworn to rend? I might be free, 3085  
 Could I but win that friendly bird to me,  
 To bring me ropes; and long in vain I sought  
 By intercourse of mutual imagery  
 Of objects, if such aid he could be taught;  
 But fruit, and flowers, and boughs, yet never ropes he brought.

## XXX

‘We live in our own world, and mine was made 3091  
 From glorious fantasies of hope departed:  
 Aye we are darkened with their floating shade,  
 Or cast a lustre on them—time imparted  
 Such power to me—I became fearless-hearted, 3095  
 My eye and voice grew firm, calm was my mind,  
 And piercing, like the morn, now it has darted  
 Its lustre on all hidden things, behind  
 Yon dim and fading clouds which load the weary wind.

## XXXI

‘My mind became the book through which I grew 3100  
 Wise in all human wisdom, and its cave,  
 Which like a mine I rifled through and through,  
 To me the keeping of its secrets gave—  
 One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave  
 Whose calm reflects all moving things that are, 3105  
 Necessity, and love, and life, the grave,  
 And sympathy, fountains of hope and fear;  
 Justice, and truth, and time, and the world’s natural sphere.

## XXXII

‘And on the sand would I make signs to range 3110  
 These woofs, as they were woven, of my thought;  
 Clear, elemental shapes, whose smallest change  
 A subtler language within language wrought:

The key of truths which once were dimly taught  
 In old Crotona;—and sweet melodies  
 Of love, in that lorn solitude I caught 3115  
 From mine own voice in dream, when thy dear eyes  
 Shone through my sleep, and did that utterance harmonize.

## XXXIII

‘Thy songs were winds whereon I fled at will,  
 As in a wingèd chariot, o’er the plain  
 Of crystal youth; and thou wert there to fill 3120  
 My heart with joy, and there we sate again  
 On the gray margin of the glimmering main,  
 Happy as then but wiser far, for we  
 Smiled on the flowery grave in which were lain  
 Fear, Faith, and Slavery; and mankind was free, 3125  
 Equal, and pure, and wise, in Wisdom’s prophecy.

## XXXIV

‘For to my will my fancies were as slaves  
 To do their sweet and subtile ministries;  
 And oft from that bright fountain’s shadowy waves  
 They would make human throngs gather and rise 3130  
 To combat with my overflowing eyes,  
 And voice made deep with passion—thus I grew  
 Familiar with the shock and the surprise  
 And war of earthly minds, from which I drew  
 The power which has been mine to frame their thoughts anew.

## XXXV

‘And thus my prison was the populous earth— 3136  
 Where I saw—even as misery dreams of morn  
 Before the east has given its glory birth—  
 Religion’s pomp made desolate by the scorn  
 Of Wisdom’s faintest smile, and thrones, uptorn, 3140  
 And dwellings of mild people interspersed  
 With undivided fields of ripening corn,  
 And love made free,—a hope which we have nursed  
 Even with our blood and tears,—until its glory burst.

## XXXVI

‘All is not lost! There is some recompense 3145  
 For hope whose fountain can be thus profound,  
 Even thronèd Evil’s splendid impotence,  
 Girt by its hell of power, the secret sound



Of hymns to truth and freedom—the dread bound  
 Of life and death passed fearlessly and well, 3150  
 Dungeons wherein the high resolve is found,  
 Racks which degraded woman's greatness tell,  
 And what may else be good and irresistible.

## XXXVII

'Such are the thoughts which, like the fires that flare  
 In storm-encompassed isles, we cherish yet 3155  
 In this dark ruin—such were mine even there;  
 As in its sleep some odorous violet,  
 While yet its leaves with nightly dews are wet,  
 Breathes in prophetic dreams of day's uprise,  
 Or, as ere Scythian frost in fear has met 3160  
 Spring's messengers descending from the skies,  
 The buds foreknow their life—this hope must ever rise.

## XXXVIII

'So years had passed, when sudden earthquake rent  
 The depth of ocean, and the cavern cracked  
 With sound, as if the world's wide continent 3165  
 Had fallen in universal ruin wracked:  
 And through the cleft streamed in one cataract  
 The stiling waters—when I woke, the flood  
 Whose banded waves that crystal cave had sacked  
 Was ebbing round me, and my bright abode 3170  
 Before me yawned—a chasm desert, and bare, and broad.

## XXXIX

'Above me was the sky, beneath the sea:  
 I stood upon a point of shattered stone,  
 And heard loose rocks rushing tumultuously  
 With splash and shock into the deep—anon 3175  
 All ceased, and there was silence wide and lone.  
 I felt that I was free! The Ocean-spray  
 Quivered beneath my feet, the broad Heaven shone  
 Around, and in my hair the winds did play  
 Lingering as they pursued their unimpeded way. 3180

## XL

'My spirit moved upon the sea like wind  
 Which round some thymy cape will lag and hover,  
 Though it can wake the still cloud, and unbind  
 The strength of tempest: day was almost over,

When through the fading light I could discover 3185  
 A ship approaching—its white sails were fed  
 With the north wind—its moving shade did cover  
 The twilight deep;—the Mariners in dread  
 Cast anchor when they saw new rocks around them spread.

## XLI

‘And when they saw one sitting on a crag, 3190  
 They sent a boat to me;—the Sailors rowed  
 In awe through many a new and fearful jag  
 Of overhanging rock, through which there flowed  
 The foam of streams that cannot make abode.  
 They came and questioned me, but when they heard 3195  
 My voice, they became silent, and they stood  
 And moved as men in whom new love had stirred  
 Deep thoughts: so to the ship we passed without a word.

## CANTO VIII

## I

‘I SATE beside the Steersman then, and gazing  
 Upon the west, cried, “Spread the sails! Behold! 3200  
 The sinking moon is like a watch-tower blazing  
 Over the mountains yet;—the City of Gold  
 Yon Cape alone does from the sight withhold;  
 The stream is fleet—the north breathes steadily  
 Beneath the stars, they tremble with the cold! 3205  
 Yet cannot rest upon the dreary sea!—  
 Haste, haste to the warm home of happier destiny!”

## II

‘The Mariners obeyed—the Captain stood  
 Aloof, and, whispering to the Pilot, said,  
 “Alas, alas! I fear we are pursued 3210  
 By wicked ghosts: a Phantom of the Dead,  
 The night before we sailed, came to my bed  
 In dream, like that!” The Pilot then replied,  
 “It cannot be—she is a human Maid—  
 Her low voice makes you weep—she is some bride, 3215  
 Or daughter of high birth—she can be nought beside.”

## III

‘We passed the islets, borne by wind and stream,  
 And as we sailed, the Mariners came near  
 And thronged around to listen;—in the gleam  
 Of the pale moon I stood, as one whom fear 3220

May not attain, and my calm voice did rear;  
 "Ye all are human—yon broad moon gives light  
 To millions who the selfsame likeness wear,  
 Even while I speak—beneath this very night, 3224  
 Their thoughts flow on like ours, in sadness or delight.

## IV

"What dream ye? Your own hands have built an home,  
 Even for yourselves on a beloved shore:  
 For some, fond eyes are pining till they come,  
 How they will greet him when his toils are o'er, 3229  
 And laughing babes rush from the well-known door!  
 Is this your care? ye toil for your own good—  
 Ye feel and think—has some immortal power  
 Such purposes? or in a human mood,  
 Dream ye some Power thus builds for man in solitude?

## V

"What is that Power? Ye mock yourselves, and give  
 A human heart to what ye cannot know: 3236  
 As if the cause of life could think and live!  
 'Twere as if man's own works should feel, and show  
 The hopes, and fears, and thoughts from which they flow,  
 And he be like to them! Lo! Plague is free 3240  
 To waste, Blight, Poison, Earthquake, Hail, and Snow,  
 Disease, and Want, and worse Necessity  
 Of hate and ill, and Pride, and Fear, and Tyranny!

## VI

"What is that Power? Some moon-struck sophist stood  
 Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown 3245  
 Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood  
 The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,  
 His likeness in the world's vast mirror shown;  
 And 'twere an innocent dream, but that a faith  
 Nursed by fear's dew of poison, grows thereon, 3250  
 And that men say, that Power has chosen Death  
 On all who scorn its laws, to wreak immortal wrath.

## VII

"Men say that they themselves have heard and seen,  
 Or known from others who have known such things,  
 A Shade, a Form, which Earth and Heaven between 3255  
 Wields an invisible rod—that Priests and Kings,

Custom, domestic sway, ay, all that brings  
 Man's freeborn soul beneath the oppressor's heel,  
 Are his strong ministers, and that the stings  
 Of death will make the wise his vengeance feel, 3260  
 Though truth and virtue arm their hearts with tenfold steel.

## VIII

"And it is said, this Power will punish wrong;  
 Yes, add despair to crime, and pain to pain!  
 And deepest hell, and deathless snakes among, 3265  
 Will bind the wretch on whom is fixed a stain,  
 Which, like a plague, a burden, and a bane,  
 Clung to him while he lived;—for love and hate,  
 Virtue and vice, they say are difference vain—  
 The will of strength is right—this human state  
 Tyrants, that they may rule, with lies thus desolate. 3270

## IX

"Alas, what strength? Opinion is more frail  
 Than yon dim cloud now fading on the moon  
 Even while we gaze, though it awhile avail  
 To hide the orb of truth—and every throne  
 Of Earth or Heaven, though shadow, rests thereon, 3275  
 One shape of many names:—for this ye plough  
 The barren waves of ocean, hence each one  
 Is slave or tyrant; all betray and bow,  
 Command, or kill, or fear, or wreak, or suffer woe.

## X

"Its names are each a sign which maketh holy 3280  
 All power—ay, the ghost, the dream, the shade  
 Of power—lust, falsehood, hate, and pride, and folly;  
 The pattern whence all fraud and wrong is made,  
 A law to which mankind has been betrayed;  
 And human love, is as the name well known 3285  
 Of a dear mother, whom the murderer laid  
 In bloody grave, and into darkness thrown,  
 Gathered her wildered babes around him as his own.

## XI

"O Love, who to the hearts of wandering men  
 Art as the calm to Ocean's weary waves! 3290  
 Justice, or Truth, or Joy! those only can  
 From slavery and religion's labyrinth caves

Guide us, as one clear star the seaman saves.  
 To give to all an equal share of good,  
 To track the steps of Freedom, though through graves  
 She pass, to suffer all in patient mood, 3294  
 To weep for crime, though stained with thy friend's dearest  
 blood,—

## XII

' "To feel the peace of self-contentment's lot,  
 To own all sympathies, and outrage none,  
 And in the inmost bowers of sense and thought, 3300  
 Until life's sunny day is quite gone down,  
 To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone,  
 To kiss salt tears from the worn cheek of Woe;  
 To live, as if to love and live were one,—  
 This is not faith or law, nor those who bow 3305  
 To thrones on Heaven or Earth, such destiny may know.

## XIII

' "But children near their parents tremble now,  
 Because they must obey—one rules another,  
 And as one Power rules both high and low,  
 So man is made the captive of his brother, 3310  
 And Hate is throned on high with Fear her mother,  
 Above the Highest—and those fountain-cells,  
 Whence love yet flowed when faith had choked all other,  
 Are darkened—Woman as the bond-slave dwells  
 Of man, a slave; and life is poisoned in its wells. 3315

## XIV

' "Man seeks for gold in mines, that he may weave  
 A lasting chain for his own slavery;—  
 In fear and restless care that he may live  
 He toils for others, who must ever be 3320  
 The joyous thralls of like captivity;  
 He murders, for his chiefs delight in ruin;  
 He builds the altar, that its idol's fee  
 May be his very blood; he is pursuing—  
 O, blind and willing wretch!—his own obscure undoing.

## XV

' "Woman!—she is his slave, she has become 3325  
 A thing I weep to speak—the child of scorn,  
 The outcast of a desolated home;  
 Falsehood, and fear, and toil, like waves have worn

Channels upon her cheek, which smiles adorn,  
 As calm decks the false Ocean:—well ye know 3330  
 What Woman is, for none of Woman born,  
 Can choose but drain the bitter dregs of woe,  
 Which ever from the oppressed to the oppressors flow.

## XVI

‘ “This need not be; ye might arise, and will  
 That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory;  
 That love, which none may bind, be free to fill 3336  
 The world, like light; and evil faith, grown hoary  
 With crime, be quenched and die.—Yon promontory  
 Even now eclipses the descending moon!—  
 Dungeons and palaces are transitory— 3340  
 High temples fade like vapour—Man alone  
 Remains, whose will has power when all beside is gone.

## XVII

‘ “Let all be free and equal!—From your hearts  
 I feel an echo; through my inmost frame  
 Like sweetest sound, seeking its mate, it darts— 3345  
 Whence come ye, friends? Alas, I cannot name  
 All that I read of sorrow, toil, and shame,  
 On your worn faces; as in legends old  
 Which make immortal the disastrous fame  
 Of conquerors and impostors false and bold, 3350  
 The discord of your hearts, I in your looks behold.

## XVIII

‘ “Whence come ye, friends? from pouring human blood  
 Forth on the earth? Or bring ye steel and gold,  
 That Kings may dupe and slay the multitude?  
 Or from the famished poor, pale, weak, and cold, 3355  
 Bear ye the earnings of their toil? Unfold!  
 Speak! Are your hands in slaughter’s sanguine hue  
 Stained freshly? have your hearts in guile grown old?  
 Know yourselves thus! ye shall be pure as dew,  
 And I will be a friend and sister unto you. 3360

## XIX

‘ “Disguise it not—we have one human heart—  
 All mortal thoughts confess a common home:  
 Blush not for what may to thyself impart  
 Stains of inevitable crime: the doom

Is this, which has, or may, or must become 3365  
 Thine, and all humankind's. Ye are the spoil  
 Which Time thus marks for the devouring tomb,  
 Thou and thy thoughts and they, and all the toil  
 Wherewith ye twine the rings of life's perpetual coil.

## XX

' "Disguise it not—ye blush for what ye hate, 3370  
 And Enmity is sister unto Shame;  
 Look on your mind—it is the book of fate—  
 Ah! it is dark with many a blazoned name  
 Of misery—all are mirrors of the same;  
 But the dark fiend who with his iron pen 3375  
 Dipped in scorn's fiery poison, makes his fame  
 Enduring there, would o'er the heads of men  
 Pass harmless, if they scorned to make their hearts his den.

## XXI

' "Yes, it is Hate—that shapeless fiendly thing  
 Of many names, all evil, some divine, 3380  
 Whom self-contempt arms with a mortal sting;  
 Which, when the heart its snaky folds entwine  
 Is wasted quite, and when it doth repine  
 To gorge such bitter prey, on all beside  
 It turns with ninefold rage, as with its twine 3385  
 When Amphisbæna some fair bird has tied,  
 Soon o'er the putrid mass he threats on every side.

## XXII

' "Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself,  
 Nor hate another's crime, nor loathe thine own.  
 It is the dark idolatry of self, 3390  
 Which, when our thoughts and actions once are gone,  
 Demands that man should weep, and bleed, and groan;  
 O vacant expiation! Be at rest.—  
 The past is Death's, the future is thine own;  
 And love and joy can make the foulest breast 3395  
 A paradise of flowers, where peace might build her nest.

## XXIII

' "Speak thou! whence come ye?"—A Youth made reply:  
 "Wearily, wearily o'er the boundless deep  
 We sail;—thou readest well the misery  
 Told in these faded eyes, but much doth sleep 3400

Within, which there the poor heart loves to keep,  
 Or dare not write on the dishonoured brow;  
 Even from our childhood have we learned to steep  
 The bread of slavery in the tears of woe,  
 And never dreamed of hope or refuge until now. 3405

## XXIV

“Yes—I must speak—my secret should have perished  
 Even with the heart it wasted, as a brand  
 Fades in the dying flame whose life it cherished,  
 But that no human bosom can withstand  
 Thee, wondrous Lady, and the mild command 3410  
 Of thy keen eyes:—yes, we are wretched slaves,  
 Who from their wonted loves and native land  
 Are reft, and bear o’er the dividing waves  
 The unregarded prey of calm and happy graves.

## XXV

“We drag afar from pastoral vales the fairest 3415  
 Among the daughters of those mountains lone,  
 We drag them there, where all things best and rarest  
 Are stained and trampled:—years have come and gone  
 Since, like the ship which bears me, I have known  
 No thought;—but now the eyes of one dear Maid 3420  
 On mine with light of mutual love have shone—  
 She is my life,—I am but as the shade  
 Of her,—a smoke sent up from ashes, soon to fade.

## XXVI

“For she must perish in the Tyrant’s hall—  
 Alas, alas!”—He ceased, and by the sail 3425  
 Sate cowering—but his sobs were heard by all,  
 And still before the ocean and the gale  
 The ship fled fast till the stars ’gan to fail,  
 And, round me gathered with mute countenance,  
 The Seamen gazed, the Pilot, worn and pale 3430  
 With toil, the Captain with gray locks, whose glance  
 Met mine in restless awe—they stood as in a trance.

## XXVII

“Recede not! pause not now! Thou art grown old,  
 But Hope will make thee young, for Hope and Youth  
 Are children of one mother, even Love—behold! 3435  
 The eternal stars gaze on us! Is the truth



Within your soul? care for your own, or ruth  
 For others' sufferings? do ye thirst to bear  
 A heart which not the serpent Custom's tooth  
 May violate?—Be free! and even here, 3440  
 Swear to be firm till death!" They cried "We swear! We swear!"

## XXVIII

'The very darkness shook, as with a blast  
 Of subterranean thunder, at the cry;  
 The hollow shore its thousand echoes cast  
 Into the night, as if the sea, and sky, 3445  
 And earth, rejoiced with new-born liberty,  
 For in that name they swore! Bolts were undrawn,  
 And on the deck, with unaccustomed eye  
 The captives gazing stood, and every one 3449  
 Shrank as the inconstant torch upon her countenance shone.

## XXIX

'They were earth's purest children, young and fair,  
 With eyes the shrines of unawakened thought,  
 And brows as bright as Spring or Morning, ere  
 Dark time had there its evil legend wrought  
 In characters of cloud which wither not.— 3455  
 The change was like a dream to them; but soon  
 They knew the glory of their altered lot,  
 In the bright wisdom of youth's breathless noon,  
 Sweet talk, and smiles, and sighs, all bosoms did attune.

## XXX

'But one was mute, her cheeks and lips most fair, 3460  
 Changing their hue like lilies newly blown,  
 Beneath a bright acacia's shadowy hair,  
 Waved by the wind amid the sunny noon,  
 Showed that her soul was quivering; and full soon  
 That Youth arose, and breathlessly did look 3465  
 On her and me, as for some speechless boon:  
 I smiled, and both their hands in mine I took,  
 And felt a soft delight from what their spirits shook.

## CANTO IX

## I

'THAT night we anchored in a woody bay,  
 And sleep no more around us dared to hover 3470  
 Than, when all doubt and fear has passed away,  
 It shades the couch of some unresting lover,

Whose heart is now at rest: thus night passed over  
 In mutual joy:—around, a forest grew  
 Of poplar and dark oaks, whose shade did cover 3475  
 The waning stars pranked in the waters blue,  
 And trembled in the wind which from the morning flew.

## II

‘The joyous Mariners, and each free Maiden,  
 Now brought from the deep forest many a bough,  
 With woodland spoil most innocently laden; 3480  
 Soon wreaths of budding foliage seemed to flow  
 Over the mast and sails, the stern and prow  
 Were canopied with blooming boughs,—the while  
 On the slant sun’s path o’er the waves we go  
 Rejoicing, like the dwellers of an isle 3485  
 Doomed to pursue those waves that cannot cease to smile.

## III

‘The many ships spotting the dark blue deep  
 With snowy sails, fled fast as ours came nigh,  
 In fear and wonder; and on every steep  
 Thousands did gaze, they heard the startling cry, 3490  
 Like Earth’s own voice lifted unconquerably  
 To all her children, the unbounded mirth,  
 The glorious joy of thy name—Liberty!  
 They heard!—As o’er the mountains of the earth  
 From peak to peak leap on the beams of Morning’s birth:

## IV

‘So from that cry over the boundless hills 3496  
 Sudden was caught one universal sound,  
 Like a volcano’s voice, whose thunder fills  
 Remotest skies,—such glorious madness found  
 A path through human hearts with stream which drowned  
 Its struggling fears and cares, dark Custom’s brood; 3501  
 They knew not whence it came, but felt around  
 A wide contagion poured—they called aloud  
 On Liberty—that name lived on the sunny flood.

## V

‘We reached the port.—Alas! from many spirits 3505  
 The wisdom which had waked that cry, was fled,  
 Like the brief glory which dark Heaven inherits  
 From the false dawn, which fades ere it is spread,

Upon the night's devouring darkness shed:  
 Yet soon bright day will burst—even like a chasm 3510  
 Of fire, to burn the shrouds outworn and dead,  
 Which wrap the world; a wide enthusiasm,  
 To cleanse the fevered world as with an earthquake's spasm!

## VI

'I walked through the great City then, but free  
 From shame or fear; those toil-worn Mariners 3515  
 And happy Maidens did encompass me;  
 And like a subterranean wind that stirs  
 Some forest among caves, the hopes and fears  
 From every human soul, a murmur strange  
 Made as I passed: and many wept, with tears 3520  
 Of joy and awe, and wingèd thoughts did range,  
 And half-extinguished words, which prophesied of change.

## VII

'For, with strong speech I tore the veil that hid  
 Nature, and Truth, and Liberty, and Love,—  
 As one who from some mountain's pyramid 3525  
 Points to the unrisen sun!—the shades approve  
 His truth, and flee from every stream and grove.  
 Thus, gentle thoughts did many a bosom fill,—  
 Wisdom, the mail of tried affections wove  
 For many a heart, and tameless scorn of ill, 3530  
 Thrice steeped in molten steel the unconquerable will.

## VIII

'Some said I was a maniac wild and lost;  
 Some, that I scarce had risen from the grave,  
 The Prophet's virgin bride, a heavenly ghost:—  
 Some said, I was a fiend from my weird cave, 3535  
 Who had stolen human shape, and o'er the wave,  
 The forest, and the mountain came;—some said  
 I was the child of God, sent down to save  
 Women from bonds and death, and on my head  
 The burden of their sins would frightfully be laid. 3540

## IX

'But soon my human words found sympathy  
 In human hearts: the purest and the best,  
 As friend with friend, made common cause with me,  
 And they were few, but resolute:—the rest,

Ere yet success the enterprise had blessed, 3545  
 Leagued with me in their hearts;—their meals, their slumber,  
 Their hourly occupations, were possessed  
 By hopes which I had armed to outnumber  
 Those hosts of meaner cares, which life's strong wings encumber.

## X

'But chiefly women, whom my voice did waken 3550  
 From their cold, careless, willing slavery,  
 Sought me: one truth their dreary prison has shaken,—  
 They looked around, and lo! they became free!  
 Their many tyrants sitting desolately  
 In slave-deserted halls, could none restrain; 3555  
 For wrath's red fire had withered in the eye,  
 Whose lightning once was death,—nor fear, nor gain  
 Could tempt one captive now to lock another's chain.

## XI

'Those who were sent to bind me, wept, and felt  
 Their minds outsoar the bonds which clasped them round,  
 Even as a waxen shape may waste and melt 3561  
 In the white furnace; and a visioned swound,  
 A pause of hope and awe the City bound,  
 Which, like the silence of a tempest's birth,  
 When in its awful shadow it has wound 3565  
 The sun, the wind, the ocean, and the earth,  
 Hung terrible, ere yet the lightnings have leaped forth.

## XII

'Like clouds inwoven in the silent sky,  
 By winds from distant regions meeting there,  
 In the high name of truth and liberty, 3570  
 Around the City millions gathered were,  
 By hopes which sprang from many a hidden lair,—  
 Words which the lore of truth in hues of flame  
 Arrayed, thine own wild songs which in the air  
 Like homeless odours floated, and the name 3575  
 Of thee, and many a tongue which thou hadst dipped in flame.

## XIII

'The Tyrant knew his power was gone, but Fear,  
 The nurse of Vengeance, bade him wait the event—  
 That perfidy and custom, gold and prayer,  
 And whatsoe'er, when force is impotent, 3580

To fraud the sceptre of the world has lent,  
 Might, as he judged, confirm his failing sway.

Therefore throughout the streets, the Priests he sent  
 To curse the rebels.—To their gods did they  
 For Earthquake, Plague, and Want, kneel in the public way.

## XIV

‘And grave and hoary men were bribed to tell 3586

From seats where law is made the slave of wrong,  
 How glorious Athens in her splendour fell,

Because her sons were free,—and that among 3590  
 Mankind, the many to the few belong,  
 By Heaven, and Nature, and Necessity.

They said, that age was truth, and that the young  
 Marred with wild hopes the peace of slavery,  
 With which old times and men had quelled the vain and free.

## XV

‘And with the falsehood of their poisonous lips 3595

They breathed on the enduring memory

Of sages and of bards a brief eclipse;

There was one teacher, who necessity

Had armed with strength and wrong against mankind, 3600  
 His slave and his avenger aye to be;

That we were weak and sinful, frail and blind,

And that the will of one was peace, and we

Should seek for nought on earth but toil and misery—

## XVI

“For thus we might avoid the hell hereafter.”

So spake the hypocrites, who cursed and lied; 3605

Alas, their sway was past, and tears and laughter

Clung to their hoary hair, withering the pride

Which in their hollow hearts dared still abide;

And yet obscener slaves with smoother brow,

And sneers on their strait lips, thin, blue and wide, 3610

Said, that the rule of men was over now,

And hence, the subject world to woman’s will must bow;

## XVII

‘And gold was scattered through the streets, and wine

Flowed at a hundred feasts within the wall.

In vain! the steady towers in Heaven did shine 3615

As they were wont. nor at the priestly call

Left Plague her banquet in the Ethiop's hall,  
 Nor Famine from the rich man's portal came,  
 Where at her ease she ever preys on all  
 Who throng to kneel for food: nor fear nor shame, 3620  
 Nor faith, nor discord, dimmed hope's newly kindled flame.

## XVIII

'For gold was as a god whose faith began  
 To fade, so that its worshippers were few,  
 And Faith itself, which in the heart of man  
 Gives shape, voice, name, to spectral Terror, knew 3625  
 Its downfall, as the altars lonelier grew,  
 Till the Priests stood alone within the fane;  
 The shafts of falsehood unpolluting flew,  
 And the cold sneers of calumny were vain,  
 The union of the free with discord's brand to stain. 3630

## XIX

'The rest thou knowest.—Lo! we two are here—  
 We have survived a ruin wide and deep—  
 Strange thoughts are mine.—I cannot grieve or fear,  
 Sitting with thee upon this lonely steep  
 I smile, though human love should make me weep. 3635  
 We have survived a joy that knows no sorrow,  
 And I do feel a mighty calmness creep  
 Over my heart, which can no longer borrow  
 Its hues from chance or change, dark children of to-morrow.

## XX

'We know not what will come—yet Laon, dearest, 3640  
 Cythna shall be the prophetess of Love,  
 Her lips shall rob thee of the grace thou wearest,  
 To hide thy heart, and clothe the shapes which rove  
 Within the homeless Future's wintry grove;  
 For I now, sitting thus beside thee, seem 3645  
 Even with thy breath and blood to live and move,  
 And violence and wrong are as a dream  
 Which rolls from steadfast truth, an unreturning stream.

## XXI

'The blasts of Autumn drive the wingèd seeds  
 Over the earth,—next come the snows, and rain, 3650  
 And frosts, and storms, which dreary Winter leads  
 Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train;

Behold! Spring sweeps over the world again,  
 Shedding soft dews from her ethereal wings;  
 Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain, 3655  
 And music on the waves and woods she flings,  
 And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.

## XXII

'O Spring, of hope, and love, and youth, and gladness  
 Wind-wingèd emblem! brightest, best and fairest!  
 Whence comest thou, when, with dark Winter's sadness 3660  
 The tears that fade in sunny smiles thou sharest?  
 Sister of joy, thou art the child who wearest  
 Thy mother's dying smile, tender and sweet;  
 Thy mother Autumn, for whose grave thou bearest  
 Fresh flowers, and beams like flowers, with gentle feet, 3665  
 Disturbing not the leaves which are her winding-sheet.

## XXIII

'Virtue, and Hope, and Love, like light and Heaven,  
 Surround the world.—We are their chosen slaves,  
 Has not the whirlwind of our spirit driven  
 Truth's deathless germs to thought's remotest caves? 3670  
 Lo, Winter comes!—the grief of many graves,  
 The frost of death, the tempest of the sword,  
 The flood of tyranny, whose sanguine waves  
 Stagnate like ice at Faith the enchanter's word,  
 And bind all human hearts in its repose abhorred. 3675

## XXIV

'The seeds are sleeping in the soil: meanwhile  
 The Tyrant peoples dungeons with his prey,  
 Pale victims on the guarded scaffold smile  
 Because they cannot speak; and, day by day,  
 The moon of wasting Science wanes away 3680  
 Among her stars, and in that darkness vast  
 The sons of earth to their foul idols pray,  
 And gray Priests triumph, and like blight or blast  
 A shade of selfish care o'er human looks is cast.

## XXV

'This is the winter of the world;—and here 3685  
 We die, even as the winds of Autumn fade,  
 Expiring in the frore and foggy air.—  
 Behold! Spring comes, though we must pass, who made

The promise of its birth,—even as the shade  
 Which from our death, as from a mountain, flings 3690  
 The future, a broad sunrise; thus arrayed  
 As with the plumes of overshadowing wings,  
 From its dark gulf of chains, Earth like an eagle springs.

## XXVI

‘O dearest love! we shall be dead and cold  
 Before this morn may on the world arise; 3695  
 Wouldst thou the glory of its dawn behold?  
 Alas! gaze not on me, but turn thine eyes  
 On thine own heart—it is a paradise  
 Which everlasting Spring has made its own,  
 And while drear Winter fills the naked skies, 3700  
 Sweet streams of sunny thought, and flowers fresh-blown,  
 Are there, and weave their sounds and odours into one.

## XXVII

‘In their own hearts the earnest of the hope  
 Which made them great, the good will ever find;  
 And though some envious shades may interlope 3705  
 Between the effect and it, One comes behind,  
 Who aye the future to the past will bind—  
 Necessity, whose sightless strength for ever  
 Evil with evil, good with good must wind  
 In bands of union, which no power may sever: 3710  
 They must bring forth their kind, and be divided never!

## XXVIII

‘The good and mighty of departed ages  
 Are in their graves, the innocent and free,  
 Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages,  
 Who leave the vesture of their majesty 3715  
 To adorn and clothe this naked world;—and we  
 Are like to them—such perish, but they leave  
 All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,  
 Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive,  
 To be a rule and law to ages that survive. 3720

## XXIX

‘So be the turf heaped over our remains  
 Even in our happy youth, and that strange lot,  
 Whate’er it be, when in these mingling veins  
 The blood is still, be ours; let sense and thought



Pass from our being, or be numbered not  
 Among the things that are; let those who come  
 Behind, for whom our steadfast will has bought  
 A calm inheritance, a glorious doom,  
 Insult with careless tread, our undivided tomb.

372<sup>f</sup>

## XXX

‘Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love,  
 Our happiness, and all that we have been,  
 Immortally must live, and burn and move,  
 When we shall be no more;—the world has seen  
 A type of peace; and—as some most serene  
 And lovely spot to a poor maniac’s eye,  
 After long years, some sweet and moving scene  
 Of youthful hope, returning suddenly,  
 Quells his long madness—thus man shall remember thee.

3730

3735

## XXXI

‘And Calumny meanwhile shall feed on us,  
 As worms devour the dead, and near the throne  
 And at the altar, most accepted thus  
 Shall sneers and curses be;—what we have done  
 None shall dare vouch, though it be truly known;  
 That record shall remain, when they must pass  
 Who built their pride on its oblivion;  
 And fame, in human hope which sculptured was,  
 Survive the perished scrolls of unenduring brass.

3740

3745

## XXXII

‘The while we two, beloved, must depart,  
 And Sense and Reason, those enchanters fair,  
 Whose wand of power is hope, would bid the heart  
 That gazed beyond the wormy grave despair:  
 These eyes, these lips, this blood, seems darkly there  
 To fade in hideous ruin; no calm sleep  
 Peopling with golden dreams the stagnant air,  
 Seems our obscure and rotting eyes to steep  
 In joy;—but senseless death—a ruin dark and deep!

3750

3755

## XXXIII

‘These are blind fancies—reason cannot know  
 What sense can neither feel, nor thought conceive;  
 There is delusion in the world—and woe,  
 And fear, and pain—we know not whence we live,

3760

Or why, or how, or what mute Power may give  
 Their being to each plant, and star, and beast,  
 Or even these thoughts.—Come near me! I do weave  
 A chain I cannot break—I am possessed  
 With thoughts too swift and strong for one lone human  
 breast. 3765

## XXXIV

‘Yes, yes—thy kiss is sweet, thy lips are warm—  
 O! willingly, belovèd, would these eyes,  
 Might they no more drink being from thy form,  
 Even as to sleep whence we again arise,  
 Close their faint orbs in death: I fear nor prize 3770  
 Aught that can now betide, unshared by thee—  
 Yes, Love when Wisdom fails makes Cythna wise:  
 Darkness and death, if death be true, must be  
 Dearer than life and hope, if unenjoyed with thee.

## XXXV

‘Alas, our thoughts flow on with stream, whose waters  
 Return not to their fountain—Earth and Heaven, 3776  
 The Ocean and the Sun, the Clouds their daughters,  
 Winter, and Spring, and Morn, and Noon, and Even,  
 All that we are or know, is darkly driven  
 Towards one gulf.—Lo! what a change is come 3780  
 Since I first spake—but time shall be forgiven,  
 Though it change all but thee!’—She ceased—night’s gloom  
 Meanwhile had fallen on earth from the sky’s sunless dome.

## XXXVI

Though she had ceased, her countenance uplifted  
 To Heaven, still spake, with solemn glory bright; 3785  
 Her dark deep eyes, her lips, whose motions gifted  
 The air they breathed with love, her locks undight.  
 ‘Fair star of life and love,’ I cried, ‘my soul’s delight,  
 Why lookest thou on the crystalline skies?  
 O, that my spirit were yon Heaven of night, 3790  
 Which gazes on thee with its thousand eyes!’  
 She turned to me and smiled—that smile was Paradise!

## CANTO X

## I

WAS there a human spirit in the steed,  
 That thus with his proud voice, ere night was gone,  
 He broke our linkèd rest? or do indeed 3795  
 All living things a common nature own,

And thought erect an universal throne,  
 Where many shapes one tribute ever bear?  
 And Earth, their mutual mother, does she groan  
 To see her sons contend? and makes she bare 3800  
 Her breast, that all in peace its drainless stores may share?

## II

I have heard friendly sounds from many a tongue  
 Which was not human—the lone nightingale  
 Has answered me with her most soothing song,  
 Out of her ivy bower, when I sate pale 3805  
 With grief, and sighed beneath; from many a dale  
 The antelopes who flocked for food have spoken  
 With happy sounds, and motions, that avail  
 Like man's own speech; and such was now the token 3810  
 Of waning night, whose calm by that proud neigh was broken.

## III

Each night, that mighty steed bore me abroad,  
 And I returned with food to our retreat,  
 And dark intelligence; the blood which flowed  
 Over the fields, had stained the courser's feet;  
 Soon the dust drinks that bitter dew,—then meet 3815  
 The vulture, and the wild dog, and the snake,  
 The wolf, and the hyæna gray, and eat  
 The dead in horrid truce: their throngs did make  
 Behind the steed, a chasm like waves in a ship's wake.

## IV

For, from the utmost realms of earth, came pouring 3820  
 The banded slaves whom every despot sent  
 At that throned traitor's summons; like the roaring  
 Of fire, whose floods the wild deer circumvent  
 In the scorched pastures of the South; so bent  
 The armies of the leaguèd Kings around 3825  
 Their files of steel and flame;—the continent  
 Trembled, as with a zone of ruin bound,  
 Beneath their feet, the sea shook with their Navies' sound.

## V

From every nation of the earth they came,  
 The multitude of moving heartless things, 3830  
 Whom slaves call men: obediently they came,  
 Like sheep whom from the fold the shepherd brings

To the stall, red with blood; their many kings  
 Led them, thus erring, from their native land;  
 Tartar and Frank, and millions whom the wings 3835  
 Of Indian breezes lull, and many a band  
 The Arctic Anarch sent, and Idumea's sand,

## VI

Fertile in prodigies and lies;—so there  
 Strange natures made a brotherhood of ill.  
 The desert savage ceased to grasp in fear 3840  
 His Asian shield and bow, when, at the will  
 Of Europe's subtler son, the bolt would kill  
 Some shepherd sitting on a rock secure;  
 But smiles of wondering joy his face would fill,  
 And savage sympathy: those slaves impure, 3845  
 Each one the other thus from ill to ill did lure.

## VII

For traitorously did that foul Tyrant robe  
 His countenance in lies,—even at the hour  
 When he was snatched from death, then o'er the globe,  
 With secret signs from many a mountain-tower, 3850  
 With smoke by day, and fire by night, the power  
 Of Kings and Priests, those dark conspirators,  
 He called:—they knew his cause their own, and swore  
 Like wolves and serpents to their mutual wars 3855  
 Strange truce, with many a rite which Earth and Heaven abhors.

## VIII

Myriads had come—millions were on their way;  
 The Tyrant passed, surrounded by the steel  
 Of hired assassins, through the public way,  
 Choked with his country's dead:—his footsteps reel  
 On the fresh blood—he smiles. 'Ay, now I feel 3860  
 I am a King in truth!' he said, and took  
 His royal seat, and bade the torturing wheel  
 Be brought, and fire, and pincers, and the hook,  
 And scorpions; that his soul on its revenge might look.

## IX

'But first, go slay the rebels—why return 3865  
 The victor bands?' he said, 'millions yet live,  
 Of whom the weakest with one word might turn  
 The scales of victory yet;—let none survive

But those within the walls—each fifth shall give  
 The expiation for his brethren here.— 3870  
 Go forth, and waste and kill!’—‘O king, forgive  
 My speech,’ a soldier answered—‘but we fear  
 The spirits of the night, and morn is drawing near;

## X

‘For we were slaying still without remorse,  
 And now that dreadful chief beneath my hand 3875  
 Defenceless lay, when, on a hell-black horse,  
 An Angel bright as day, waving a brand  
 Which flashed among the stars, passed.’—‘Dost thou stand  
 Parleying with me, thou wretch?’ the king replied;  
 ‘Slaves, bind him to the wheel; and of this band, 3880  
 Whoso will drag that woman to his side  
 That scared him thus, may burn his dearest foe beside;

## XI

‘And gold and glory shall be his.—Go forth!’  
 They rushed into the plain.—Loud was the roar  
 Of their career: the horsemen shook the earth; 3885  
 The wheeled artillery’s speed the pavement tore;  
 The infantry, file after file, did pour  
 Their clouds on the utmost hills. Five days they slew  
 Among the wasted fields; the sixth saw gore  
 Stream through the city; on the seventh, the dew 3890  
 Of slaughter became stiff, and there was peace anew:

## XII

Peace in the desert fields and villages,  
 Between the glutted beasts and mangled dead!  
 Peace in the silent streets! save when the cries  
 Of victims to their fiery judgement led, 3895  
 Made pale their voiceless lips who seemed to dread  
 Even in their dearest kindred, lest some tongue  
 Be faithless to the fear yet unbetrayed;  
 Peace in the Tyrant’s palace, where the throng  
 Waste the triumphal hours in festival and song! 3900

## XIII

Day after day the burning sun rolled on  
 Over the death-polluted land—it came  
 Out of the east like fire, and fiercely shone  
 A lamp of Autumn, ripening with its flame

The few lone ears of corn;—the sky became 3905  
 Stagnate with heat, so that each cloud and blast  
 Languished and died,—the thirsting air did claim  
 All moisture, and a rotting vapour passed  
 From the unburied dead, invisible and fast.

## XIV

First Want, then Plague came on the beasts; their food  
 Failed, and they drew the breath of its decay. 3911  
 Millions on millions, whom the scent of blood  
 Had lured, or who, from regions far away,  
 Had tracked the hosts in festival array,  
 From their dark deserts; gaunt and wasting now, 3915  
 Stalked like fell shades among their perished prey;  
 In their green eyes a strange disease did glow.  
 They sank in hideous spasm, or pains severe and slow.

## XV

The fish were poisoned in the streams; the birds  
 In the green woods perished; the insect race 3920  
 Was withered up; the scattered flocks and herds  
 Who had survived the wild beasts' hungry chase  
 Died moaning, each upon the other's face  
 In helpless agony gazing; round the City  
 All night, the lean hyænas their sad case 3925  
 Like starving infants wailed; a woeful ditty!  
 And many a mother wept, pierced with unnatural pity.

## XVI

Amid the æreal minarets on high,  
 The Ethiopian vultures fluttering fell  
 From their long line of brethren in the sky, 3930  
 Startling the concourse of mankind.—Too well  
 These signs the coming mischief did foretell:—  
 Strange panic first, a deep and sickening dread  
 Within each heart, like ice, did sink and dwell,  
 A voiceless thought of evil, which did spread 3935  
 With the quick glance of eyes, like withering lightnings shed.

## XVII

Day after day, when the year wanes, the frosts  
 Strip its green crown of leaves, till all is bare;  
 So on those strange and congregated hosts  
 Came Famine, a swift shadow, and the air 3940

Groaned with the burden of a new despair;  
 Famine, than whom Misrule no deadlier daughter  
 Feeds from her thousand breasts, though sleeping there  
 With lidless eyes, lie Faith, and Plague, and Slaughter,  
 A ghastly brood; conceived of Lethe's sullen water. 3945

## XVIII

There was no food, the corn was trampled down,  
 The flocks and herds had perished; on the shore  
 The dead and putrid fish were ever thrown;  
 The deeps were foodless, and the winds no more  
 Creaked with the weight of birds, but, as before 3950  
 Those wingèd things sprang forth, were void of shade;  
 The vines and orchards, Autumn's golden store,  
 Were burned;—so that the meanest food was weighed  
 With gold, and Avarice died before the god it made.

## XIX

There was no corn—in the wide market-place 3955  
 All loathliest things, even human flesh, was sold;  
 They weighed it in small scales—and many a face  
 Was fixed in eager horror then: his gold  
 The miser brought; the tender maid, grown bold  
 Through hunger, bared her scornèd charms in vain; 3960  
 The mother brought her eldest-born, controlled  
 By instinct blind as love, but turned again  
 And bade her infant suck, and died in silent pain.

## XX

Then fell blue Plague upon the race of man.  
 'O, for the sheathèd steel, so late which gave 3965  
 Oblivion to the dead, when the streets ran  
 With brothers' blood! O, that the earthquake's grave  
 Would gape, or Ocean lift its stifling wave!'  
 Vain cries—throughout the streets, thousands pursued  
 Each by his fiery torture howl and rave, 3970  
 Or sit, in frenzy's unimagined mood,  
 Upon fresh heaps of dead; a ghastly multitude.

## XXI

It was not hunger now, but thirst. Each well  
 Was choked with rotting corpses, and became 3975  
 A cauldron of green mist made visible  
 At sunrise. Thither still the myriads came,

Seeking to quench the agony of the flame,  
Which raged like poison through their bursting veins;  
Naked they were from torture, without shame,  
Spotted with nameless scars and lurid blains, 3980  
Childhood, and youth, and age, writhing in savage pains.

## XXII

It was not thirst but madness! Many saw  
Their own lean image everywhere, it went  
A ghastlier self beside them, till the awe  
Of that dread sight to self-destruction sent 3985  
Those shrieking victims; some, ere life was spent,  
Sought, with a horrid sympathy, to shed  
Contagion on the sound; and others rent  
Their matted hair, and cried aloud, 'We tread  
On fire! the avenging Power his hell on earth has spread!'

## XXIII

Sometimes the living by the dead were hid. 3991  
Near the great fountain in the public square,  
Where corpses made a crumbling pyramid  
Under the sun, was heard one stifled prayer  
For life, in the hot silence of the air; 3995  
And strange 'twas, amid that hideous heap to see  
Some shrouded in their long and golden hair,  
As if not dead, but slumbering quietly  
Like forms which sculptors carve, then love to agony.

## XXIV

Famine had spared the palace of the king:— 4000  
He rioted in festival the while,  
He and his guards and priests; but Plague did fling  
One shadow upon all. Famine can smile  
On him who brings it food, and pass, with guile  
Of thankful falsehood, like a courtier gray, 4005  
The house-dog of the throne; but many a mile  
Comes Plague, a wingèd wolf, who loathes alway  
The garbage and the scum that strangers make her prey.

## XXV

So, near the throne, amid the gorgeous feast,  
Sheathed in resplendent arms, or loosely dight 4010  
To luxury, ere the mockery yet had ceased  
That lingered on his lips, the warrior's might



Was loosened, and a new and ghastlier night  
 In dreams of frenzy lapped his eyes; he fell  
 Headlong, or with stiff eyeballs sate upright 4015  
 Among the guests, or raving mad, did tell  
 Strange truths; a dying seer of dark oppression's hell.

## XXVI

The Princes and the Priests were pale with terror;  
 That monstrous faith wherewith they ruled mankind,  
 Fell, like a shaft loosed by the bowman's error, 4020  
 On their own hearts: they sought and they could find  
 No refuge—'twas the blind who led the blind!  
 So, through the desolate streets to the high fane,  
 The many-tongued and endless armies wind  
 In sad procession: each among the train 4025  
 To his own Idol lifts his supplications vain.

## XXVII

'O God!' they cried, 'we know our secret pride  
 Has scorned thee, and thy worship, and thy name;  
 Secure in human power we have defied  
 Thy fearful might; we bend in fear and shame 4030  
 Before thy presence; with the dust we claim  
 Kindred; be merciful, O King of Heaven!  
 Most justly have we suffered for thy fame  
 Made dim, but be at length our sins forgiven,  
 Ere to despair and death thy worshippers be driven. 4035

## XXVIII

'O King of Glory! thou alone hast power!  
 Who can resist thy will? who can restrain  
 Thy wrath, when on the guilty thou dost shower  
 The shafts of thy revenge, a blistering rain?  
 Greatest and best, be merciful again! 4040  
 Have we not stabbed thine enemies, and made  
 The Earth an altar, and the Heavens a fane,  
 Where thou wert worshipped with their blood, and laid  
 Those hearts in dust which would thy searchless works have  
 weighed?

## XXIX

'Well didst thou loosen on this impious City 4045  
 Thine angels of revenge: recall them now;  
 Thy worshippers, abased, here kneel for pity,  
 And bind their souls by an immortal vow:

We swear by thee! and to our oath do thou  
 Give sanction, from thine hell of fiends and flame, 4050  
 That we will kill with fire and torments slow,  
 The last of those who mocked thy holy name,  
 And scorned the sacred laws thy prophets did proclaim.'

## XXX

Thus they with trembling limbs and pallid lips  
 Worshipped their own hearts' image, dim and vast,  
 Scared by the shade wherewith they would eclipse 4056  
 The light of other minds;—troubled they passed  
 From the great Temple;—fiercely still and fast  
 The arrows of the plague among them fell,  
 And they on one another gazed aghast, 4060  
 And through the hosts contention wild befell,  
 As each of his own god the wondrous works did tell.

## XXXI

And Oromaze, Joshua, and Mahomet,  
 Moses and Buddh, Zerdusht, and Brahm, and Foh,  
 A tumult of strange names, which never met 4065  
 Before, as watchwords of a single woe,  
 Arose; each raging votary 'gan to throw  
 Aloft his armèd hands, and each did howl  
 'Our God alone is God!'—and slaughter now  
 Would have gone forth, when from beneath a cowl 4070  
 A voice came forth, which pierced like ice through every soul.

## XXXII

'Twas an Iberian Priest from whom it came,  
 A zealous man, who led the legioned West,  
 With words which faith and pride had steeped in flame,  
 To quell the unbelievers; a dire guest 4075  
 Even to his friends was he, for in his breast  
 Did hate and guile lie watchful, intertwined,  
 Twin serpents in one deep and winding nest;  
 He loathed all faith beside his own, and pined  
 To wreak his fear of Heaven in vengeance on mankind.

## XXXIII

But more he loathed and hated the clear light 4081  
 Of wisdom and free thought, and more did fear,  
 Lest, kindled once, its beams might pierce the night,  
 Even where his Idol stood; for, far and near

Did many a heart in Europe leap to hear 4085  
 That faith and tyranny were trampled down;  
 Many a pale victim, doomed for truth to share  
 The murderer's cell, or see, with helpless groan,  
 The priests his children drag for slaves to serve their own.

## XXXIV

He dared not kill the infidels with fire 4090  
 Or steel, in Europe; the slow agonies  
 Of legal torture mocked his keen desire:  
 So he made truce with those who did despise  
 The expiation, and the sacrifice,  
 That, though detested, Islam's kindred creed 4095  
 Might crush for him those deadlier enemies;  
 For fear of God did in his bosom breed  
 A jealous hate of man, an unreposing need.

## XXXV

'Peace! Peace!' he cried, 'when we are dead, the Day  
 Of Judgement comes, and all shall surely know 4100  
 Whose God is God, each fearfully shall pay  
 The errors of his faith in endless woe!  
 But there is sent a mortal vengeance now  
 On earth, because an impious race had spurned  
 Him whom we all adore,—a subtle foe, 4105  
 By whom for ye this dread reward was earned,  
 And kingly thrones, which rest on faith, nigh overturned.

## XXXVI

'Think ye, because ye weep, and kneel, and pray,  
 That God will lull the pestilence? It rose  
 Even from beneath his throne, where, many a day, 4110  
 His mercy soothed it to a dark repose:  
 It walks upon the earth to judge his foes;  
 And what are thou and I, that he should deign  
 To curb his ghastly minister, or close  
 The gates of death, ere they receive the twain 4115  
 Who shook with mortal spells his undefended reign?

## XXXVII

'Ay, there is famine in the gulf of hell,  
 Its giant worms of fire for ever yawn.—  
 Their lurid eyes are on us! those who fell  
 By the swift shafts of pestilence ere dawn, 4120

Are in their jaws! they hunger for the spawn  
 Of Satan, their own brethren, who were sent  
 To make our souls their spoil. See! see! they fawn  
 Like dogs, and they will sleep with luxury spent,  
 When those detested hearts their iron fangs have rent! 4125

## XXXVIII

'Our God may then lull Pestilence to sleep:—  
 Pile high the pyre of expiation now,  
 A forest's spoil of boughs, and on the heap  
 Pour venomous gums, which sullenly and slow,  
 When touched by flame, shall burn, and melt, and flow,  
 A stream of clinging fire,—and fix on high 4131  
 A net of iron, and spread forth below  
 A couch of snakes, and scorpions, and the fry  
 Of centipedes and worms, earth's hellish progeny!

## XXXIX

'Let Laon and Laone on that pyre, 4135  
 Linked tight with burning brass, perish!—then pray  
 That, with this sacrifice, the withering ire  
 Of Heaven may be appeased.' He ceased, and they  
 A space stood silent, as far, far away  
 The echoes of his voice among them died; 4140  
 And he knelt down upon the dust, away  
 Muttering the curses of his speechless pride,  
 Whilst shame, and fear, and awe, the armies did divide.

## XL

His voice was like a blast that burst the portal  
 Of fabled hell; and as he spake, each one 4145  
 Saw gape beneath the chasms of fire immortal,  
 And Heaven above seemed cloven, where, on a throne  
 Girt round with storms and shadows, sate alone  
 Their King and Judge—fear killed in every breast  
 All natural pity then, a fear unknown 4150  
 Before, and with an inward fire possessed,  
 They raged like homeless beasts whom burning woods invest.

## XLI

'Twas morn.—At noon the public crier went forth,  
 Proclaiming through the living and the dead,  
 'The Monarch saith, that his great Empire's worth 4155  
 Is set on Laon and Laone's head:

He who but one yet living here can lead,  
 Or who the life from both their hearts can wring,  
 Shall be the kingdom's heir, a glorious meed!  
 But he who both alive can hither bring, 4160  
 The Princess shall espouse, and reign an equal King.'

## XLII

Ere night the pyre was piled, the net of iron  
 Was spread above, the fearful couch below;  
 It overtopped the towers that did environ  
 That spacious square; for Fear is never slow 4165  
 To build the thrones of Hate, her mate and foe,  
 So, she scourged forth the maniac multitude  
 To rear this pyramid—tottering and slow,  
 Plague-stricken, foodless, like lean herds pursued  
 By gadflies, they have piled the heath, and gums, and wood.

## XLIII

Night came, a starless and a moonless gloom. 4171  
 Until the dawn, those hosts of many a nation  
 Stood round that pile, as near one lover's tomb  
 Two gentle sisters mourn their desolation;  
 And in the silence of that expectation, 4175  
 Was heard on high the reptiles' hiss and crawl—  
 It was so deep—save when the devastation  
 Of the swift pest, with fearful interval,  
 Marking its path with shrieks, among the crowd would fall.

## XLIV

Morn came,—among those sleepless multitudes, 4180  
 Madness, and Fear, and Plague, and Famine still  
 Heaped corpse on corpse, as in autumnal woods  
 The frosts of many a wind with dead leaves fill  
 Earth's cold and sullen brooks; in silence, still  
 The pale survivors stood; ere noon, the fear 4185  
 Of Hell became a panic, which did kill  
 Like hunger or disease, with whispers drear,  
 As 'Hush! hark! Come they yet? Just Heaven! thine hour is  
 near!'

## XLV

And Priests rushed through their ranks, some counterfeiting  
 The rage they did inspire, some mad indeed 4190  
 With their own lies; they said their god was waiting  
 To see his enemies writhe, and burn, and bleed,—

And that, till then, the snakes of Hell had need  
 Of human souls:—three hundred furnaces  
 Soon blazed through the wide City, where, with speed,  
 Men brought their infidel kindred to appease 4196  
 God's wrath, and while they burned, knelt round on quivering  
 knees.

## XLVI

The noontide sun was darkened with that smoke,  
 The winds of eve dispersed those ashes gray.  
 The madness which these rites had lulled, awoke 4200  
 Again at sunset.—Who shall dare to say  
 The deeds which night and fear brought forth, or weigh  
 In balance just the good and evil there?  
 He might man's deep and searchless heart display,  
 And cast a light on those dim labyrinths, where 4205  
 Hope, near imagined chasms, is struggling with despair.

## XLVII

'Tis said, a mother dragged three children then,  
 To those fierce flames which roast the eyes in the head,  
 And laughed, and died; and that unholy men,  
 Feasting like fiends upon the infidel dead, 4210  
 Looked from their meal, and saw an Angel tread  
 The visible floor of Heaven, and it was she!  
 And, on that night, one without doubt or dread  
 Came to the fire, and said, 'Stop, I am he!  
 Kill me!'—They burned them both with hellish mockery.

## XLVIII

And, one by one, that night, young maidens came, 4216  
 Beauteous and calm, like shapes of living stone  
 Clothed in the light of dreams, and by the flame  
 Which shrank as overgorged, they laid them down,  
 And sung a low sweet song, of which alone 4220  
 One word was heard, and that was Liberty;  
 And that some kissed their marble feet, with moan  
 Like love, and died; and then that they did die  
 With happy smiles, which sunk in white tranquillity.

## CANTO XI

## I

SHE saw me not—she heard me not— alone 4225  
 Upon the mountain's dizzy brink she stood;  
 She spake not, breathed not, moved not—there was thrown  
 Over her look, the shadow of a mood

Which only clothes the heart in solitude,  
 A thought of voiceless depth;—she stood alone, 4230  
 Above, the Heavens were spread;—below, the flood  
 Was murmuring in its caves;—the wind had blown  
 Her hair apart, through which her eyes and forehead shone.

## II

A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains;  
 Before its blue and moveless depth were flying 4235  
 Gray mists poured forth from the unresting fountains  
 Of darkness in the North:—the day was dying:—  
 Sudden, the sun shone forth, its beams were lying  
 Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see,  
 And on the shattered vapours, which defying 424  
 The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly  
 In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

## III

It was a stream of living beams, whose bank  
 On either side by the cloud's cleft was made;  
 And where its chasms that flood of glory drank, 4245  
 Its waves gushed forth like fire, and as if swayed  
 By some mute tempest, rolled on *her*; the shade  
 Of her bright image floated on the river  
 Of liquid light, which then did end and fade—  
 Her radiant shape upon its verge did shiver; 4250  
 Aloft, her flowing hair like strings of flame did quiver.

## IV

I stood beside her, but she saw me not—  
 She looked upon the sea, and skies, and earth;  
 Rapture, and love, and admiration wrought  
 A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth, 4255  
 Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth  
 From common joy; which with the speechless feeling  
 That led her there united, and shot forth  
 From her far eyes a light of deep revealing,  
 All but her dearest self from my regard concealing. 4260

## V

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath  
 Was now heard there;—her dark and intricate eyes  
 Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,  
 Absorbed the glories of the burning skies.

Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstasies, 4265  
 Burst from her looks and gestures;—and a light  
 Of liquid tenderness, like love, did rise  
 From her whole frame, an atmosphere which quite  
 Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright.

## VI

She would have clasped me to her glowing frame; 4270  
 Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed  
 On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame  
 Which now the cold winds stole;—she would have laid  
 Upon my languid heart her dearest head;  
 I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet; 4275  
 Her eyes mingling with mine, might soon have fed  
 My soul with their own joy.—One moment yet  
 I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet!

## VII

Never but once to meet on Earth again!  
 She heard me as I fled—her eager tone 4280  
 Sunk on my heart, and almost wove a chain  
 Around my will to link it with her own,  
 So that my stern resolve was almost gone.  
 'I cannot reach thee! whither dost thou fly?  
 My steps are faint—Come back, thou dearest one—  
 Return, ah me! return!'—The wind passed by 4286  
 On which those accents died, faint, far, and lingeringly.

## VIII

Woe! Woe! that moonless midnight!—Want and Pest  
 Were horrible, but one more fell doth rear,  
 As in a hydra's swarming lair, its crest 4290  
 Eminent among those victims—even the Fear  
 Of Hell: each girt by the hot atmosphere  
 Of his blind agony, like a scorpion stung  
 By his own rage upon his burning bier  
 Of circling coals of fire; but still there clung 4295  
 One hope, like a keen sword on starting threads uphung:

## IX

Not death—death was no more refuge or rest;  
 Not life—it was despair to be!—not sleep,  
 For fiends and chasms of fire had dispossessed  
 All natural dreams: to wake was not to weep, 4300



But to gaze mad and pallid, at the leap  
 To which the Future, like a snaky scourge,  
 Or like some tyrant's eye, which aye doth keep  
 Its withering beam upon his slaves, did urge  
 Their steps; they heard the roar of Hell's sulphureous surge.

## X

Each of that multitude, alone, and lost 4306  
 To sense of outward things, one hope yet knew;  
 As on a foam-girt crag some seaman tossed  
 Stares at the rising tide, or like the crew  
 Whilst now the ship is splitting through and through;  
 Each, if the tramp of a far steed was heard, 4311  
 Started from sick despair, or if there flew  
 One murmur on the wind, or if some word  
 Which none can gather yet, the distant crowd has stirred.

## XI

Why became cheeks, wan with the kiss of death, 4315  
 Paler from hope? they had sustained despair.  
 Why watched those myriads with suspended breath  
 Sleepless a second night? they are not here,  
 The victims, and hour by hour, a vision drear,  
 Warm corpses fall upon the clay-cold dead; 4320  
 And even in death their lips are wreathed with fear.—  
 The crowd is mute and moveless—overhead  
 Silent Arcturus shines—'Ha! hear'st thou not the tread

## XII

'Of rushing feet? laughter? the shout, the scream,  
 Of triumph not to be contained? See! hark! 4325  
 They come, they come! give way!' Alas, ye deem  
 Falsely—'tis but a crowd of maniacs stark  
 Driven, like a troop of spectres, through the dark,  
 From the choked well, whence a bright death-fire sprung,  
 A lurid earth-star, which dropped many a spark 4330  
 From its blue train, and spreading widely, clung  
 To their wild hair, like mist the topmost pines among.

## XIII

And many, from the crowd collected there,  
 Joined that strange dance in fearful sympathies;  
 There was the silence of a long despair, 4335  
 When the last echo of those terrible cries

Came from a distant street, like agonies  
 Stifled afar.—Before the Tyrant's throne  
 All night his aged Senate sate, their eyes  
 In stony expectation fixed; when one 4340  
 Sudden before them stood, a Stranger and alone.

## XIV

Dark Priests and haughty Warriors gazed on him  
 With baffled wonder, for a hermit's vest  
 Concealed his face; but, when he spake, his tone,  
 Ere yet the matter did their thoughts arrest,— 4345  
 Earnest, benignant, calm, as from a breast  
 Void of all hate or terror—made them start;  
 For as with gentle accents he addressed  
 His speech to them, on each unwilling heart  
 Unusual awe did fall—a spirit-quelling dart. 4350

## XV

'Ye Princes of the Earth, ye sit aghast  
 Amid the ruin which yourselves have made,  
 Yes, Desolation heard your trumpet's blast,  
 And sprang from sleep!—dark Terror has obeyed  
 Your bidding—O, that I whom ye have made 4355  
 Your foe, could set my dearest enemy free  
 From pain and fear! but evil casts a shade,  
 Which cannot pass so soon, and Hate must be  
 The nurse and parent still of an ill progeny.

## XVI

'Ye turn to Heaven for aid in your distress; 4360  
 Alas, that ye, the mighty and the wise,  
 Who, if ye dared, might not aspire to less  
 Than ye conceive of power, should fear the lies  
 Which thou, and thou, didst frame for mysteries  
 To blind your slaves:—consider your own thought, 4365  
 An empty and a cruel sacrifice  
 Ye now prepare, for a vain idol wrought  
 Out of the fears and hate which vain desires have brought.

## XVII

'Ye seek for happiness—alas, the day!  
 Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold, 4370  
 Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway  
 For which, O willing slaves to Custom old,

Severe taskmistress! ye your hearts have sold.  
 Ye seek for peace, and when ye die, to dream  
 No evil dreams: all mortal things are cold 4375  
 And senseless then; if aught survive, I deem  
 It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

## XVIII

'Fear not the future, weep not for the past.  
 O, could I win your ears to dare be now  
 Glorious, and great, and calm! that ye would cast 4380  
 Into the dust those symbols of your woe,  
 Purple, and gold, and steel! that ye would go  
 Proclaiming to the nations whence ye came.  
 That Want, and Plague, and Fear, from slavery flow;  
 And that mankind is free, and that the shame 4385  
 Of royalty and faith is lost in freedom's fame!

## XIX

'If thus, 'tis well—if not, I come to say  
 That Laon—' while the Stranger spoke, among  
 The Council sudden tumult and affray  
 Arose, for many of those warriors young, 4390  
 Had on his eloquent accents fed and hung  
 Like bees on mountain-flowers; they knew the truth,  
 And from their thrones in vindication sprung;  
 The men of faith and law then without ruth  
 Drew forth their secret steel, and stabbed each ardent youth.

## XX

They stabbed them in the back and sneered—a slave 4396  
 Who stood behind the throne, those corpses drew  
 Each to its bloody, dark, and secret grave;  
 And one more daring raised his steel anew  
 To pierce the Stranger. 'What hast thou to do 4400  
 With me, poor wretch?'—Calm, solemn, and severe,  
 That voice unstrung his sinews, and he threw  
 His dagger on the ground, and pale with fear,  
 Sate silently—his voice then did the Stranger rear.

## XXI

'It doth avail not that I weep for ye— 4405  
 Ye cannot change, since ye are old and gray,  
 And ye have chosen your lot—your fame must be  
 A book of blood, whence in a milder day

Men shall learn truth, when ye are wrapped in clay:  
 Now ye shall triumph. I am Laon's friend, 4410  
 And him to your revenge will I betray,  
 So ye concede one easy boon. Attend!  
 For now I speak of things which ye can apprehend.

## XXII

'There is a People mighty in its youth,  
 A land beyond the Oceans of the West, 4415  
 Where, though with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth  
 Are worshipped; from a glorious Mother's breast,  
 Who, since high Athens fell, among the rest  
 Sate like the Queen of Nations, but in woe,  
 By inbred monsters outraged and oppressed, 4420  
 Turns to her chainless child for succour now,  
 It draws the milk of Power in Wisdom's fullest flow.

## XXIII

'That land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze  
 Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume  
 Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze 4425  
 Of sunrise gleams when Earth is wrapped in gloom;  
 An epitaph of glory for the tomb  
 Of murdered Europe may thy fame be made,  
 Great People! as the sands shalt thou become; 4429  
 Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;  
 The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade.

## XXIV

'Yes, in the desert there is built a home  
 For Freedom. Genius is made strong to rear  
 The monuments of man beneath the dome  
 Of a new Heaven; myriads assemble there, 4435  
 Whom the proud lords of man, in rage or fear,  
 Drive from their wasted homes: the boon I pray  
 Is this—that Cythna shall be convoyed there—  
 Nay, start not at the name—America!  
 And then to you this night Laon will I betray. 4440

## XXV

'With me do what you will. I am your foe!'  
 The light of such a joy as makes the stare  
 Of hungry snakes like living emeralds glow,  
 Shone in a hundred human eyes—'Where, where

Is Laon? Haste! fly! drag him swiftly here! 4445  
 We grant thy boon.'—'I put no trust in ye,  
 Swear by the Power ye dread.'—'We swear, we swear!'  
 The Stranger threw his vest back suddenly,  
 And smiled in gentle pride, and said, 'Lo! I am he!'

## CANTO XII

## I

THE transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness 4450  
 Spread through the multitudinous streets, fast flying  
 Upon the winds of fear; from his dull madness  
 The starveling waked, and died in joy; the dying,  
 Among the corpses in stark agony lying,  
 Just heard the happy tidings, and in hope 4455  
 Closed their faint eyes; from house to house replying  
 With loud acclaim, the living shook Heaven's cope,  
 And filled the startled Earth with echoes: morn did ope

## II

Its pale eyes then; and lo! the long array  
 Of guards in golden arms, and Priests beside, 4460  
 Singing their bloody hymns, whose garbs betray  
 The blackness of the faith it seems to hide;  
 And see, the Tyrant's gem-wrought chariot glide  
 Among the gloomy cowls and glittering spears—  
 A Shape of light is sitting by his side, 4465  
 A child most beautiful. I' the midst appears  
 Laon,—exempt alone from mortal hopes and fears.

## III

His head and feet are bare, his hands are bound  
 Behind and with heavy chains, yet none do wreak  
 Their scoffs on him, though myriads throng around; 4470  
 There are no sneers upon his lip which speak  
 That scorn or hate has made him bold; his cheek  
 Resolve has not turned pale,—his eyes are mild  
 And calm, and, like the morn about to break,  
 Smile on mankind—his heart seems reconciled 4475  
 To all things and itself, like a reposing child.

## IV

Tumult was in the soul of all beside,  
 Ill joy, or doubt, or fear; but those who saw  
 Their tranquil victim pass, felt wonder glide  
 Into their brain, and became calm with awe.— 4480

See, the slow pageant near the pile doth draw.  
 A thousand torches in the spacious square,  
   Borne by the ready slaves of ruthless law,  
 Await the signal round: the morning fair  
 Is changed to a dim night by that unnatural glare. 4485

## V

And see! beneath a sun-bright canopy,  
   Upon a platform level with the pile,  
 The anxious Tyrant sit, enthroned on high,  
   Girt by the chieftains of the host; all smile  
   In expectation, but one child: the while 4490  
 I, Laon, led by mutes, ascend my bier  
   Of fire, and look around: each distant isle  
 Is dark in the bright dawn; towers far and near,  
 Pierce like reposing flames the tremulous atmosphere.

## VI

There was such silence through the host, as when 4495  
   An earthquake trampling on some populous town,  
 Has crushed ten thousand with one tread, and men  
   Expect the second; all were mute but one,  
   That fairest child, who, bold with love, alone  
 Stood up before the King, without avail, 4500  
   Pleading for Laon's life—her stifled groan  
 Was heard—she trembled like one aspen pale  
 Among the gloomy pines of a Norwegian vale.

## VII

What were his thoughts linked in the morning sun,  
   Among those reptiles, stingless with delay, 4505  
 Even like a tyrant's wrath?—The signal-gun  
   Roared—hark, again! In that dread pause he lay  
   As in a quiet dream—the slaves obey—  
 A thousand torches drop,—and hark, the last  
   Bursts on that awful silence; far away, 4510  
 Millions, with hearts that beat both loud and fast,  
 Watch for the springing flame expectant and aghast.

## VIII

They fly—the torches fall—a cry of fear  
   Has startled the triumphant!—they recede!  
 For ere the cannon's roar has died, they hear 4515  
   The tramp of hoofs like earthquake, and a steed

Dark and gigantic, with the tempest's speed,  
 Bursts through their ranks: a woman sits thereon,  
 Fairer, it seems, than aught that earth can breed,  
 Calm, radiant, like the phantom of the dawn,  
 A spirit from the caves of daylight wandering gone. 4520

## IX

All thought it was God's Angel come to sweep  
 The lingering guilty to their fiery grave;  
 The Tyrant from his throne in dread did leap,—  
 Her innocence his child from fear did save; 4525  
 Scared by the faith they feigned, each priestly slave  
 Knelt for his mercy whom they served with blood,  
 And, like the reflux of a mighty wave  
 Sucked into the loud sea, the multitude  
 With crushing panic, fled in terror's altered mood. 4530

## X

They pause, they blush, they gaze,—a gathering shout  
 Bursts like one sound from the ten thousand streams  
 Of a tempestuous sea:—that sudden rout  
 One checked, who, never in his mildest dreams 4535  
 Felt awe from grace or loveliness, the seams  
 Of his rent heart so hard and cold a creed  
 Had seared with blistering ice—but he misdeems  
 That he is wise, whose wounds do only bleed  
 Inly for self—thus thought the Iberian Priest indeed,

## XI

And others too, thought he was wise to see, 4540  
 In pain, and fear, and hate, something divine;  
 In love and beauty, no divinity.—  
 Now with a bitter smile, whose light did shine  
 Like a fiend's hope upon his lips and eyne, 4545  
 He said, and the persuasion of that sneer  
 Rallied his trembling comrades—'Is it mine  
 To stand alone, when kings and soldiers fear  
 A woman? Heaven has sent its other victim here.'

## XII

'Were it not impious,' said the King, 'to break  
 Our holy oath?'—'Impious to keep it, say!' 4550  
 Shrieked the exulting Priest—'Slaves, to the stake  
 Bind her, and on my head the burden lay

Of her just torments:—at the Judgement Day  
 Will I stand up before the golden throne  
 Of Heaven, and cry, “To thee did I betray 4555  
 An Infidel; but for me she would have known  
 Another moment’s joy! the glory be thine own!”’

## XIII

They trembled, but replied not, nor obeyed,  
 Pausing in breathless silence. Cythna sprung 4560  
 From her gigantic steed, who, like a shade  
 Chased by the winds, those vacant streets among  
 Fled tameless, as the brazen rein she flung  
 Upon his neck, and kissed his moonèd brow.  
 A piteous sight, that one so fair and young,  
 The clasp of such a fearful death should woo 4565  
 With smiles of tender joy as beamed from Cythna now.

## XIV

The warm tears burst in spite of faith and fear  
 From many a tremulous eye, but like soft dews  
 Which feed Spring’s earliest buds, hung gathered there,  
 Frozen by doubt,—alas! they could not choose 4570  
 But weep; for when her faint limbs did refuse  
 To climb the pyre, upon the mutes she smiled;  
 And with her eloquent gestures, and the hues  
 Of her quick lips, even as a weary child  
 Wins sleep from some fond nurse with its caresses mild,

## XV

She won them, though unwilling, her to bind 4576  
 Near me, among the snakes. When there had fled  
 One soft reproach that was most thrilling kind,  
 She smiled on me, and nothing then we said,  
 But each upon the other’s countenance fed 4580  
 Looks of insatiate love; the mighty veil  
 Which doth divide the living and the dead  
 Was almost rent, the world grew dim and pale,—  
 All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.—

## XVI

Yet—yet—one brief relapse, like the last beam 4585  
 Of dying flames, the stainless air around  
 Hung silent and serene—a blood-red gleam  
 Burst upwards, hurling fiercely from the ground



The globèd smoke,—I heard the mighty sound  
 Of its uprise, like a tempestuous ocean; 4590  
 And through its chasms I saw, as in a swoond,  
 The tyrant's child fall without life or motion  
 Before his throne, subdued by some unseen emotion.

## XVII

And is this death?—The pyre has disappeared,  
 The Pestilence, the Tyrant, and the throng; 4595  
 The flames grow silent—slowly there is heard  
 The music of a breath-suspending song,  
 Which, like the kiss of love when life is young,  
 Steeps the faint eyes in darkness sweet and deep:  
 With ever-changing notes it floats along, 4600  
 Till on my passive soul there seemed to creep  
 A melody, like waves on wrinkled sands that leap.

## XVIII

The warm touch of a soft and tremulous hand  
 Wakened me then; lo! Cythna sate reclined  
 Beside me, on the waved and golden sand 4605  
 Of a clear pool, upon a bank o'ertwined  
 With strange and star-bright flowers, which to the wind  
 Breathed divine odour; high above, was spread  
 The emerald heaven of trees of unknown kind,  
 Whose moonlike blooms and bright fruit overhead 4610  
 A shadow, which was light, upon the waters shed.

## XIX

And round about sloped many a lawny mountain  
 With incense-bearing forests, and vast caves  
 Of marble radiance, to that mighty fountain;  
 And where the flood its own bright margin laves, 4615  
 Their echoes talk with its eternal waves,  
 Which, from the depths whose jagged caverns breed  
 Their unreposing strife, it lifts and heaves,—  
 Till through a chasm of hills they roli, and feed  
 A river deep, which flies with smooth but arrowy speed.

## XX

As we sate gazing in a trance of wonder, 4621  
 A boat approached, borne by the musical air  
 Along the waves which sung and sparkled under  
 Its rapid keel—a wingèd shape sate there.

A child with silver-shining wings, so fair, 4625  
 That as her bark did through the waters glide,  
 The shadow of the lingering waves did wear  
 Light, as from starry beams; from side to side,  
 While veering to the wind her plumes the bark did guide.

## XXI

The boat was one curved shell of hollow pearl, 4630  
 Almost translucent with the light divine  
 Of her within; the prow and stern did curl  
 Hornèd on high, like the young moon supine,  
 When o'er dim twilight mountains dark with pine,  
 It floats upon the sunset's sea of beams, 4635  
 Whose golden waves in many a purple line  
 Fade fast, till borne on sunlight's ebbing streams,  
 Dilating, on earth's verge the sunken meteor gleams.

## XXII

Its keel has struck the sands beside our feet;—  
 Then Cythna turned to me, and from her eyes 4640  
 Which swam with unshed tears, a look more sweet  
 Than happy love, a wild and glad surprise,  
 Glanced as she spake: 'Ay, this is Paradise  
 And not a dream, and we are all united!  
 Lo, that is mine own child, who in the guise 4645  
 Of madness came, like day to one benighted  
 In lonesome woods: my heart is now too well requited!'

## XXIII

And then she wept aloud, and in her arms  
 Clasped that bright Shape, less marvellously fair  
 Than her own human hues and living charms; 4650  
 Which, as she leaned in passion's silence there,  
 Breathed warmth on the cold bosom of the air,  
 Which seemed to blush and tremble with delight;  
 The glossy darkness of her streaming hair  
 Fell o'er that snowy child, and wrapped from sight 4655  
 The fond and long embrace which did their hearts unite.

## XXIV

Then the bright child, the plumèd Seraph came,  
 And fixed its blue and beaming eyes on mine,  
 And said, 'I was disturbed by tremulous shame  
 When once we met, yet knew that I was thine 4660

From the same hour in which thy lips divine  
 Kindled a clinging dream within my brain,  
 Which ever waked when I might sleep, to twine  
 Thine image with *her* memory dear—again  
 We meet; exempted now from mortal fear or pain. 4665

## XXV

‘When the consuming flames had wrapped ye round,  
 The hope which I had cherished went away;  
 I fell in agony on the senseless ground,  
 And hid mine eyes in dust, and far astray  
 My mind was gone, when bright, like dawning day,  
 The Spectre of the Plague before me flew, 4671  
 And breathed upon my lips, and seemed to say,  
 “They wait for thee, beloved!”—then I knew  
 The death-mark on my breast, and became calm anew.

## XXVI

‘It was the calm of love—for I was dying. 4675  
 I saw the black and half-extinguished pyre  
 In its own gray and shrunken ashes lying;  
 The pitchy smoke of the departed fire  
 Still hung in many a hollow dome and spire  
 Above the towers, like night; beneath whose shade 4680  
 Awed by the ending of their own desire  
 The armies stood; a vacancy was made  
 In expectation’s depth, and so they stood dismayed.

## XXVII

‘The frightful silence of that altered mood,  
 The tortures of the dying clove alone, 4685  
 Till one uprose among the multitude,  
 And said—“The flood of time is rolling on,  
 We stand upon its brink, whilst *they* are gone  
 To glide in peace down death’s mysterious stream. 4689  
 Have ye done well? They moulder flesh and bone,  
 Who might have made this life’s envenomed dream  
 A sweeter draught than ye will ever taste, I deem.

## XXVIII

“These perish as the good and great of yore  
 Have perished, and their murderers will repent,— 4693  
 Yes, vain and barren tears shall flow before  
 Yon smoke has faded from the firmament

Even for this cause, that ye who must lament  
 The death of those that made this world so fair,  
 Cannot recall them now; but there is lent  
 To man the wisdom of a high despair, 4700  
 When such can die, and he live on and linger here.

## XXIX

“Ay, ye may fear not now the Pestilence,  
 From fabled hell as by a charm withdrawn;  
 All power and faith must pass, since calmly hence  
 In pain and fire have unbelievers gone; 4705  
 And ye must sadly turn away, and moan  
 In secret, to his home each one returning,  
 And to long ages shall this hour be known;  
 And slowly shall its memory, ever burning,  
 Fill this dark night of things with an eternal morning.

## XXX

“For me the world is grown too void and cold, 4711  
 Since Hope pursues immortal Destiny  
 With steps thus slow—therefore shall ye behold  
 How those who love, yet fear not, dare to die;  
 Tell to your children this!” Then suddenly 4715  
 He sheathed a dagger in his heart and fell;  
 My brain grew dark in death, and yet to me  
 There came a murmur from the crowd, to tell  
 Of deep and mighty change which suddenly befell.

## XXXI

‘Then suddenly I stood, a wingèd Thought, 4720  
 Before the immortal Senate, and the seat  
 Of that star-shining spirit, whence is wrought  
 The strength of its dominion, good and great,  
 The better Genius of this world’s estate.  
 His realm around one mighty Fane is spread, 4725  
 Elysian islands bright and fortunate,  
 Calm dwellings of the free and happy dead,  
 Where I am sent to lead!’ These wingèd words she said,

## XXXII

And with the silence of her eloquent smile,  
 Bade us embark in her divine canoe; 4730  
 Then at the helm we took our seat, the while  
 Above her head those plumes of dazzling hue

Into the winds' invisible stream she threw,  
 Sitting beside the prow: like gossamer  
 On the swift breath of morn, the vessel flew 4735  
 O'er the bright whirlpools of that fountain fair,  
 Whose shores receded fast, whilst we seemed lingering there;

## XXXIII

Till down that mighty stream, dark, calm, and fleet,  
 Between a chasm of cedarn mountains riven,  
 Chased by the thronging winds whose viewless feet 4740  
 As swift as twinkling beams, had, under Heaven,  
 From woods and waves wild sounds and odours driven,  
 The boat fled visibly—three nights and days,  
 Borne like a cloud through morn, and noon, and even,  
 We sailed along the winding watery ways 4745  
 Of the vast stream, a long and labyrinthine maze.

## XXXIV

A scene of joy and wonder to behold  
 That river's shapes and shadows changing ever,  
 When the broad sunrise filled with deepening gold  
 Its whirlpools, where all hues did spread and quiver;  
 And where melodious falls did burst and shiver 4751  
 Among rocks clad with flowers, the foam and spray  
 Sparkled like stars upon the sunny river,  
 Or when the moonlight poured a holier day,  
 One vast and glittering lake around green islands lay. 4755

## XXXV

Morn, noon, and even, that boat of pearl outran  
 The streams which bore it, like the arrowy cloud  
 Of tempest, or the speedier thought of man,  
 Which flieth forth and cannot make abode;  
 Sometimes through forests, deep like night, we glode,  
 Between the walls of mighty mountains crowned 4761  
 With Cyclopean piles, whose turrets proud,  
 The homes of the departed, dimly frowned  
 O'er the bright waves which girt their dark foundations round.

## XXXVI

Sometimes between the wide and flowering meadows,  
 Mile after mile we sailed, and 'twas delight 4766  
 To see far off the sunbeams chase the shadows  
 Over the grass; sometimes beneath the night

Of wide and vaulted caves, whose roofs were bright  
 With starry gems, we fled, whilst from their deep 4770  
 And dark-green chasms, shades beautiful and white,  
 Amid sweet sounds across our path would sweep,  
 Like swift and lovely dreams that walk the waves of sleep.

## XXXVII

And ever as we sailed, our minds were full  
 Of love and wisdom, which would overflow 4775  
 In converse wild, and sweet, and wonderful,  
 And in quick smiles whose light would come and go  
 Like music o'er wide waves, and in the flow  
 Of sudden tears, and in the mute caress—  
 For a deep shade was cleft, and we did know, 4780  
 That virtue, though obscured on Earth, not less  
 Survives all mortal change in lasting loveliness.

## XXXVIII

Three days and nights we sailed, as thought and feeling  
 Number delightful hours—for through the sky  
 The spherèd lamps of day and night, revealing 4785  
 New changes and new glories, rolled on high,  
 Sun, Moon, and moonlike lamps, the progeny  
 Of a diviner Heaven, serene and fair:  
 On the fourth day, wild as a windwrought sea  
 The stream became, and fast and faster bare 4790  
 The spirit-wingèd boat, steadily speeding there.

## XXXIX

Steady and swift, where the waves rolled like mountains  
 Within the vast ravine, whose rifts did pour  
 Tumultuous floods from their ten thousand fountains,  
 The thunder of whose earth-uplifting roar 4795  
 Made the air sweep in whirlwinds from the shore,  
 Calm as a shade, the boat of that fair child  
 Securely fled, that rapid stress before,  
 Amid the topmost spray, and sunbows wild,  
 Wreathed in the silver mist: in joy and pride we smiled.

## XL

The torrent of that wide and raging river 4801  
 Is passed, and our aëreal speed suspended.  
 We look behind; a golden mist did quiver  
 Where its wild surges with the lake were blended,—

Our bark hung there, as on a line suspended 4805  
 Between two heavens,—that windless waveless lake  
 Which four great cataracts from four vales, attended  
 By mists, aye feed; from rocks and clouds they break,  
 And of that azure sea a silent refuge make.

## XLI

Motionless resting on the lake awhile, 4810  
 I saw its marge of snow-bright mountains rear  
 Their peaks aloft, I saw each radiant isle,  
 And in the midst, afar, even like a sphere  
 Hung in one hollow sky, did there appear  
 The Temple of the Spirit; on the sound 4815  
 Which issued thence, drawn nearer and more near,  
 Like the swift moon this glorious earth around,  
 The charmed boat approached, and there its haven found.

## NOTE ON THE REVOLT OF ISLAM, BY MRS. SHELLEY

SHELLEY possessed two remarkable qualities of intellect—a brilliant imagination, and a logical exactness of reason. His inclinations led him (he fancied) almost alike to poetry and metaphysical discussions. I say 'he fancied,' because I believe the former to have been paramount, and that it would have gained the mastery even had he struggled against it. However, he said that he deliberated at one time whether he should dedicate himself to poetry or metaphysics; and, resolving on the former, he educated himself for it, discarding in a great measure his philosophical pursuits, and engaging himself in the study of the poets of Greece, Italy, and England. To these may be added a constant perusal of portions of the Old Testament—the Psalms, the Book of Job, the Prophet Isaiah, and others, the sublime poetry of which filled him with delight.

As a poet, his intellect and compositions were powerfully influenced by exterior circumstances, and especially by his place of abode. He was very fond of travelling, and ill-health increased this restlessness. The sufferings occasioned by a cold English winter made him pine, especially when our colder spring arrived, for a more genial climate. In 1816 he again visited Switzerland, and rented a house on the banks of the Lake of Geneva; and many a day, in cloud or sunshine, was passed alone in his boat—sailing as the wind listed, or weltering on the calm waters. The majestic aspect of Nature ministered such thoughts as he afterwards enwove in verse. His lines on the Bridge of the Arve, and his *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, were written at this time. Perhaps during this summer his genius was checked by association with another poet whose nature was utterly dissimilar to his own, yet who, in the poem he wrote

at that time, gave tokens that he shared for a period the more abstract and etherealised inspiration of Shelley. The saddest events awaited his return to England; but such was his fear to wound the feelings of others that he never expressed the anguish he felt, and seldom gave vent to the indignation roused by the persecutions he underwent; while the course of deep unexpressed passion, and the sense of injury, engendered the desire to embody themselves in forms defecated of all the weakness and evil which cling to real life.

He chose therefore for his hero a youth nourished in dreams of liberty, some of whose actions are in direct opposition to the opinions of the world; but who is animated throughout by an ardent love of virtue, and a resolution to confer the boons of political and intellectual freedom on his fellow-creatures. He created for this youth a woman such as he delighted to imagine—full of enthusiasm for the same objects; and they both, with will unvanquished, and the deepest sense of the justice of their cause, met adversity and death. There exists in this poem a memorial of a friend of his youth. The character of the old man who liberates Laon from his tower-prison, and tends on him in sickness, is founded on that of Doctor Lind, who, when Shelley was at Eton, had often stood by to befriend and support him, and whose name he never mentioned without love and veneration.

During the year 1817 we were established at Marlow in Buckinghamshire. Shelley's choice of abode was fixed chiefly by this town being at no great distance from London, and its neighbourhood to the Thames. The poem was written in his boat, as it floated under the beech-groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the neighbouring country, which is distinguished for peculiar beauty. The chalk hills break into cliffs that overhang the Thames, or form valleys clothed with beech; the wilder portion of the country is rendered beautiful by exuberant vegetation; and the cultivated part is peculiarly fertile. With all this wealth of Nature which, either in the form of gentlemen's parks or soil dedicated to agriculture, flourishes around, Marlow was inhabited (I hope it is altered now) by a very poor population. The women are lacemakers, and lose their health by sedentary labour, for which they were very ill paid. The Poor-laws ground to the dust not only the paupers, but those who had risen just above that state, and were obliged to pay poor-rates. The changes produced by peace following a long war, and a bad harvest, brought with them the most heart-rending evils to the poor. Shelley afforded what alleviation he could. In the winter, while bringing out his poem, he had a severe attack of ophthalmia, caught while visiting the poor cottages. I mention these things—for this minute and active sympathy with his fellow-creatures gives a thousandfold interest to his speculations, and stamps with reality his pleadings for the human race.

The poem, bold in its opinions and uncompromising in their expression, met with many censurers, not only among those who allow of no virtue but such as supports the cause they espouse, but even among those whose opinions were similar to his own. I extract a portion of a letter written in



answer to one of these friends. It best details the impulses of Shelley's mind, and his motives: it was written with entire unreserve; and is therefore a precious monument of his own opinion of his powers, of the purity of his designs, and the ardour with which he clung, in adversity and through the valley of the shadow of death, to views from which he believed the permanent happiness of mankind must eventually spring.)

*'Marlow, Dec. 11, 1817.*

'I have read and considered all that you say about my general powers, and the particular instance of the poem in which I have attempted to develop them. Nothing can be more satisfactory to me than the interest which your admonitions express. But I think you are mistaken in some points with regard to the peculiar nature of my powers, whatever be their amount. I listened with deference and self-suspicion to your censures of *The Revolt of Islam*; but the productions of mine which you commend hold a very low place in my own esteem; and this reassures me, in some degree at least. The poem was produced by a series of thoughts which filled my mind with unbounded and sustained enthusiasm. I felt the precariousness of my life, and I engaged in this task, resolved to leave some record of myself. Much of what the volume contains was written with the same feeling—as real, though not so prophetic—as the communications of a dying man. I never presumed indeed to consider it anything approaching to faultless; but, when I consider contemporary productions of the same apparent pretensions, I own I was filled with confidence. I felt that it was in many respects a genuine picture of my own mind. I felt that the sentiments were true, not assumed. And in this have I long believed that my power consists; in sympathy, and that part of the imagination which relates to sentiment and contemplation. I am formed, if for anything not in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend minute and remote distinction of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us, and to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the material universe as a whole. Of course, I believe these faculties, which perhaps comprehend all that is sublime in man, to exist very imperfectly in my own mind. But, when you advert to my Chancery-paper, a cold, forced, unimpassioned, insignificant piece of cramped and cautious argument, and to the little scrap about *Mandeville*, which expressed my feelings indeed, but cost scarcely two minutes' thought to express, as specimens of my powers more favourable than that which grew as it were from "the agony and bloody sweat" of intellectual travail; surely I must feel that, in some manner, either I am mistaken in believing that I have any talent at all or you in the selection of the specimens of it. Yet, after all, I cannot but be conscious, in much of what I write, of an absence of that tranquillity which is the attribute and accompaniment of power. This feeling alone would make your most kind and wise admonitions, on the subject of the economy of intellectual force, valuable to me. And, if I live, or if I see

any trust in coming years, doubt not but that I shall do something, whatever it may be, which a serious and earnest estimate of my powers will suggest to me, and which will be in every respect accommodated to their utmost limits.' [Shelley to Godwin.]

## PRINCE ATHANASE <sup>1</sup>

### A FRAGMENT

#### PART I

THERE was a youth, who, as with toil and travel,  
Had grown quite weak and gray before his time;  
Nor any could the restless griefs unravel

Which burned within him, withering up his prime  
And goading him, like fiends, from land to land. 5  
Not his the load of any secret crime,

For nought of ill his heart could understand,  
But pity and wild sorrow for the same;—  
Not his the thirst for glory or command,

Baffled with blast of hope-consuming shame; 10  
Nor evil joys which fire the vulgar breast,  
And quench in speedy smoke its feeble flame,

Had left within his soul their dark unrest:  
Nor what religion fables of the grave  
Feared he,—Philosophy's accepted guest. 15

For none than he a purer heart could have,  
Or that loved good more for itself alone;  
Of nought in heaven or earth was he the slave.

What sorrow, strange, and shadowy, and unknown,  
Sent him, a hopeless wanderer, through mankind?— 20  
If with a human sadness he did groan,

<sup>1</sup> The idea Shelley had formed of Prince Athanase was a good deal modelled on *Alastor*. In the first sketch of the poem, he named it *Pandemos and Urania*. Athanase seeks through the world the One whom he may love. He meets, in the ship in which he is embarked, a lady who appears to him to embody his ideal of love and beauty. But she proves to be Pandemos, or the earthly and unworthy Venus; who, after disappointing his cherished dreams and hopes, deserts him. Athanase, crushed by sorrow, pines and dies. 'On his deathbed, the lady who can really reply to his soul comes and kisses his lips' (*The Deathbed of Athanase*). The poet describes her [in the words of the final fragment, p. 185]. This slender note is all we have to aid our imagination in shaping out the form of the poem, such as its author imagined. [Mrs. Shelley's Note.]

He had a gentle yet aspiring mind;  
Just, innocent, with varied learning fed;  
And such a glorious consolation find

In others' joy, when all their own is dead: 25  
He loved, and laboured for his kind in grief,  
And yet, unlike all others, it is said

That from such toil he never found relief.  
Although a child of fortune and of power,  
Of an ancestral name the orphan chief, 30

His soul had wedded Wisdom, and her dower  
Is love and justice, clothed in which he sate  
Apart from men, as in a lonely tower,

Pitying the tumult of their dark estate.—  
Yet even in youth did he not e'er abuse 35  
The strength of wealth or thought, to consecrate

Those false opinions which the harsh rich use  
To blind the world they famish for their pride;  
Nor did he hold from any man his dues,

But, like a steward in honest dealings tried, 40  
With those who toiled and wept, the poor and wise,  
His riches and his cares he did divide.

Fearless he was, and scorning all disguise,  
What he dared do or think, though men might start,  
He spoke with mild yet unaverted eyes; 45

Liberal he was of soul, and frank of heart,  
And to his many friends—all loved him well—  
Whate'er he knew or felt he would impart,

If words he found those inmost thoughts to tell;  
If not, he smiled or wept; and his weak foes 50  
He neither spurned nor hated—though with fell

And mortal hate their thousand voices rose,  
They passed like aimless arrows from his ear—  
Nor did his heart or mind its portal close .

To those, or them, or any, whom life's sphere 55  
May comprehend within its wide array.  
What sadness made that vernal spirit sere?—

He knew not. Though his life, day after day,  
 Was failing like an un replenished stream,  
 Though in his eyes a cloud and burthen lay, 60

Through which his soul, like Vesper's serene beam  
 Piercing the chasms of ever rising clouds,  
 Shone, softly burning; though his lips did seem

Like reeds which quiver in impetuous floods;  
 And through his sleep, and o'er each waking hour, 65  
 Thoughts after thoughts, unresting multitudes,

Were driven within him by some secret power,  
 Which bade them blaze, and live, and roll afar,  
 Like lights and sounds, from haunted tower to tower

O'er castled mountains borne, when tempest's war 70  
 Is levied by the night-contending winds,  
 And the pale dalesmen watch with eager ear;—

Though such were in his spirit, as the fiends  
 Which wake and feed an everliving woe,—  
 What was this grief, which ne'er in other minds 75

A mirror found,—he knew not—none could know;  
 But on whoe'er might question him he turned  
 The light of his frank eyes, as if to show

He knew not of the grief within that burned,  
 But asked forbearance with a mournful look; 80  
 Or spoke in words from which none ever learned

The cause of his disquietude; or shook  
 With spasms of silent passion; or turned pale:  
 So that his friends soon rarely undertook

To stir his secret pain without avail;— 85  
 For all who knew and loved him then perceived  
 That there was drawn an adamantine veil

Between his heart and mind,—both unrelieved  
 Wrought in his brain and bosom separate strife.  
 Some said that he was mad, others believed 90

That memories of an antenatal life  
 Made this, where now he dwelt, a penal hell;  
 And others said that such mysterious grief

From God's displeasure, like a darkness, fell  
On souls like his, which owned no higher law 95  
Than love; love calm, steadfast, invincible

By mortal fear or supernatural awe;  
And others,—'Tis the shadow of a dream  
Which the veiled eye of Memory never saw,

'But through the soul's abyss, like some dark stream 100  
Through shattered mines and caverns underground,  
Rolls, shaking its foundations; and no beam

'Of joy may rise, but it is quenched and drowned  
In the dim whirlpools of this dream obscure;  
Soon its exhausted waters will have found 105

'A lair of rest beneath thy spirit pure,  
O Athanase!—in one so good and great,  
Evil or tumult cannot long endure.'

So spake they: idly of another's state  
Babbling vain words and fond philosophy; 110  
This was their consolation; such debate

Men held with one another; nor did he,  
Like one who labours with a human woe,  
Decline this talk: as if its theme might be

Another, not himself, he to and fro 115  
Questioned and canvassed it with subtlest wit;  
And none but those who loved him best could know

That which he knew not, how it galled and bit  
His weary mind, this converse vain and cold;  
For like an eyeless nightmare grief did sit 120

Upon his being; a snake which fold by fold  
Pressed out the life of life, a clinging fiend  
Which clenched him if he stirred with deadlier hold;—  
And so his grief remained—let it remain—untold.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Author was pursuing a fuller development of the ideal character of Athanase, when it struck him that in an attempt at extreme refinement and analysis, his conceptions might be betrayed into assuming a morbid character. The reader will judge whether he is a loser or gainer by the difference. [Shelley's Note.]

## PART II

## FRAGMENT I

PRINCE ATHANASE had one belovèd friend, 125  
 An old, old man, with hair of silver white,  
 And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend

With his wise words; and eyes whose arrowy light  
 Shone like the reflex of a thousand minds.  
 He was the last whom superstition's blight 130

Had spared in Greece—the blight that cramps and blinds,—  
 And in his olive bower at Ænoe  
 Had sate from earliest youth. Like one who finds

A fertile island in the barren sea,  
 One mariner who has survived his mates 135  
 Many a drear month in a great ship—so he

With soul-sustaining songs, and sweet debates  
 Of ancient lore, there fed his lonely being:—  
 'The mind becomes that which it contemplates.'—

And thus Zonoras, by forever seeing 140  
 Their bright creations, grew like wisest men;  
 And when he heard the crash of nations fleeing

A bloodier power than ruled thy ruins then,  
 O sacred Hellas! many weary years  
 He wandered, till the path of Laian's glen 145

Was grass-grown—and the unremembered tears  
 Were dry in Laian for their honoured chief,  
 Who fell in Byzant, pierced by Moslem spears:—

And as the lady looked with faithful grief  
 From her high lattice o'er the rugged path, 150  
 Where she once saw that horseman toil, with brief

And blighting hope, who with the news of death  
 Struck body and soul as with a mortal blight,  
 She saw between the chestnuts, far beneath,

An old man toiling up, a weary wight; 155  
 And soon within her hospitable hall  
 She saw his white hairs glittering in the light

Of the wood fire, and round his shoulders fall;  
And his wan visage and his withered mien,  
Yet calm and gentle and majestic.

160

And Athanase, her child, who must have been  
Then three years old, sate opposite and gazed  
In patient silence.

FRAGMENT II

SUCH was Zonoras; and as daylight finds  
One amaranth glittering on the path of frost,  
When autumn nights have nipped all weaker kinds,

165

Thus through his age, dark, cold, and tempest-tossed,  
Shone truth upon Zonoras; and he filled  
From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and lost,

The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child,  
With soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore  
And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild.

170

And sweet and subtle talk they evermore,  
The pupil and the master, shared; until,  
Sharing that undiminishable store,

175

The youth, as shadows on a grassy hill  
Outrun the winds that chase them, soon outran  
His teacher, and did teach with native skill

Strange truths and new to that experienced man;  
Still they were friends, as few have ever been  
Who mark the extremes of life's discordant span.

180

So in the caverns of the forest green,  
Or on the rocks of echoing ocean hoar,  
Zonoras and Prince Athanase were seen

By summer woodmen; and when winter's roar  
Sounded o'er earth and sea its blast of war,  
The Balearic fisher, driven from shore,

185

Hanging upon the peaked wave afar,  
Then saw their lamp from Laian's turret gleam,  
Piercing the stormy darkness, like a star

190

Which pours beyond the sea one steadfast beam,  
 Whilst all the constellations of the sky  
 Seemed reeling through the storm . . . They did but seem—

For, lo! the wintry clouds are all gone by,  
 And bright Arcturus through yon pines is glowing, 195  
 And far o'er southern waves, immovably

Belted Orion hangs—warm light is flowing  
 From the young moon into the sunset's chasm.—  
 'O, summer eve! with power divine, bestowing

'On thine own bird the sweet enthusiasm 200  
 Which overflows in notes of liquid gladness,  
 Filling the sky like light! How many a spasm

'Of fevered brains, oppressed with grief and madness,  
 Were lulled by thee, delightful nightingale,—  
 And these soft waves, murmuring a gentle sadness,— 205

'And the far sighings of yon piny dale  
 Made vocal by some wind we feel not here.—  
 I bear alone what nothing may avail

'To lighten—a strange load!'—No human ear  
 Heard this lament; but o'er the visage wan 210  
 Of Athanase, a ruffling atmosphere

Of dark emotion, a swift shadow, ran,  
 Like wind upon some forest-bosomed lake,  
 Glassy and dark.—And that divine old man

Beheld his mystic friend's whole being shake, 215  
 Even where its inmost depths were gloomiest—  
 And with a calm and measured voice he spake,

And, with a soft and equal pressure, pressed  
 That cold lean hand:—'Dost thou remember yet  
 When the curved moon then lingering in the west 220

'Paused, in yon waves her mighty horns to wet,  
 How in those beams we walked, half resting on the sea?  
 'Tis just one year—sure thou dost not forget—

'Then Plato's words of light in thee and me  
 Lingered like moonlight in the moonless east, 225  
 For we had just then read—thy memory



'Is faithful now—the story of the feast;  
And Agathon and Diotima seemed  
From death and dark forgetfulness released . . . .'

FRAGMENT III

AND when the old man saw that on the green 230  
Leaves of his opening a blight had lighted  
He said: 'My friend, one grief alone can wean

A gentle mind from all that once delighted:—  
Thou lovest, and thy secret heart is laden  
With feelings which should not be unrequited.' 235

And Athanase . . . then smiled, as one o'erladen  
With iron chains might smile to talk (?) of bands  
Twined round her lover's neck by some blithe maiden,  
And said . . . .

FRAGMENT IV

'TWAS at the season when the Earth upsprings 240  
From slumber, as a spherèd angel's child,  
Shadowing its eyes with green and golden wings,

Stands up before its mother bright and mild,  
Of whose soft voice the air expectant seems—  
So stood before the sun, which shone and smiled 245

To see it rise thus joyous from its dreams,  
The fresh and radiant Earth. The hoary grove  
Waxed green—and flowers burst forth like starry beams;—

The grass in the warm sun dið start and move,  
And sea-buds burst under the waves serene:— 250  
How many a one, though none be near to love,

Loves then the shade of his own soul, half seen  
In any mirror—or the spring's young minions,  
The wingèd leaves amid the copses green;—

How many a spirit then puts on the pinions 255  
Of fancy, and outstrips the lagging blast,  
And his own steps—and over wide dominions

Sweeps in his dream-drawn chariot, far and fast,  
More fleet than storms—the wide world shrinks below,  
When winter and despondency are past. 260

## FRAGMENT V

'Twas at this season that Prince Athanase  
 Passed the white Alps—those eagle-baffling mountains  
 Slept in their shrouds of snow;—beside the ways

The waterfalls were voiceless—for their fountains  
 Were changed to mines of sunless crystal now, 265  
 Or by the curdling winds—like brazen wings

Which clanged along the mountain's marble brow—  
 Warped into adamantine fretwork, hung  
 And filled with frozen light the chasms below.

Vexed by the blast, the great pines groaned and swung  
 Under their load of [snow]— . . . . . 271  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . .

Such as the eagle sees, when he dives down  
 From the gray deserts of wide air, [beheld] 275  
 [Prince] Athanase; and o'er his mien (?) was thrown

The shadow of that scene, field after field,  
 Purple and dim and wide . . . . .

## FRAGMENT VI

Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all  
 We can desire, O Love! and happy souls, 280  
 Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn fall,

Catch thee, and feed from their o'erflowing bowls  
 Thousands who thirst for thine ambrosial dew;—  
 Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls

Investeth it; and when the heavens are blue 285  
 Thou fillest them; and when the earth is fair  
 The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

Its deserts and its mountains, till they wear  
 Beauty like some light robe;—thou ever soarest  
 Among the towers of men, and as soft air 290

In spring, which moves the unawakened forest,  
 Clothing with leaves its branches bare and bleak,  
 Thou floatest among men; and aye implorest

P R I N C E A T H A N A S E

185

That which from thee they should implore:—the weak  
Alone kneel to thee, offering up the hearts  
The strong have broken—yet where shall any seek

295

A garment whom thou clothest not? the darts  
Of the keen winter storm, barbèd with frost,  
Which, from the everlasting snow that parts

The Alps from Heaven, pierce some traveller lost  
In the wide waved interminable snow  
Ungarmented, . . . .

300

ANOTHER FRAGMENT (A)

YES, often when the eyes are cold and dry,  
And the lips calm, the Spirit weeps within  
Tears bitterer than the blood of agony

305

Trembling in drops on the discoloured skin  
Of those who love their kind and therefore perish  
In ghastly torture—a sweet medicine

Of peace and sleep are tears, and quietly  
Them soothe from whose uplifted eyes they fall  
But . . . .

310

ANOTHER FRAGMENT (B)

HER hair was brown, her spherèd eyes were brown,  
And in their dark and liquid moisture swam,  
Like the dim orb of the eclipsèd moon;

Yet when the spirit flashed beneath, there came  
The light from them, as when tears of delight  
Double the western planet's serene flame.

315

ROSALIND AND HELEN

A MODERN ECLOGUE

ADVERTISEMENT

THE story of *Rosalind and Helen* is, undoubtedly, not an attempt in the highest style of poetry. It is in no degree calculated to excite profound meditation; and if, by interesting the affections and amusing the imagination, it awakens a certain ideal melancholy favourable to the reception of more important impressions, it will produce in the reader all that the writer experienced in the composition. I resigned myself, as I

wrote, to the impulse of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story; and this impulse determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it.

I do not know which of the few scattered poems I left in England will be selected by my bookseller to add to this collection. One,<sup>1</sup> which I sent from Italy, was written after a day's excursion among those lovely mountains which surround what was once the retreat, and where is now the sepulchre, of Petrarch. If any one is inclined to condemn the insertion of the introductory lines, which image forth the sudden relief of a state of deep despondency by the radiant visions disclosed by the sudden burst of an Italian sunrise in autumn on the highest peak of those delightful mountains, I can only offer as my excuse, that they were not erased at the request of a dear friend, with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than any one to complain, that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness.

NAPLES, Dec. 20, 1818.

ROSALIND, HELEN AND HER CHILD

*Scene, the Shore of the Lake of Como*

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Helen.</i> Come hither, my sweet<br/> Rosalind.<br/> 'Tis long since thou and I have<br/> met;<br/> And yet methinks it were unkind<br/> Those moments to forget.<br/> Come sit by me. I see thee stand 5<br/> By this lone lake, in this far land,<br/> Thy loose hair in the light wind<br/> flying,<br/> Thy sweet voice to each tone of<br/> even<br/> United, and thine eyes replying<br/> To the hues of yon fair heaven. 10<br/> Come, gentle friend: wilt sit by me?<br/> And be as thou wert wont to be<br/> Ere we were disunited?<br/> None doth behold us now: the<br/> power<br/> That led us forth at this lone hour<br/> Will be but ill requited 16<br/> If thou depart in scorn: oh! come,<br/> And talk of our abandoned home.</p> | <p>Remember, this is Italy,<br/> And we are exiles. Talk with me 20<br/> Of that our land, whose wilds and<br/> floods,<br/> Barren and dark although they be,<br/> Were dearer than these chestnut<br/> woods:<br/> Those heathy paths, that inland<br/> stream,<br/> And the blue mountains, shapes<br/> which seem 25<br/> Like wrecks of childhood's sunny<br/> dream:<br/> Which that we have abandoned<br/> now,<br/> Weighs on the heart like that re-<br/> morse<br/> Which altered friendship leaves. I<br/> seek 29<br/> No more our youthful intercourse.<br/> That cannot be! Rosalind, speak.<br/> Speak to me. Leave me not.—When<br/> morn did come,</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

<sup>1</sup> 'Lines written among the Euganean Hills.'

When evening fell upon our common home,

When for one hour we parted,—  
do not frown:

I would not chide thee, though thy  
faith is broken:

But turn to me. Oh! by this cherished token, 36

Of woven hair, which thou wilt not  
disown,

Turn, as 'twere but the memory of  
me,

And not my scornèd self who  
prayed to thee.

*Rosalind.* Is it a dream, or do I  
see 40

And hear frail Helen? I would flee  
Thy tainting touch; but former  
years

Arise, and bring forbidden tears;  
And my o'erburthened memory

Seeks yet its lost repose in thee. 45

I share thy crime. I cannot choose  
But weep for thee: mine own  
strange grief

But seldom stoops to such relief:  
Nor ever did I love thee less,

Though mourning o'er thy wicked-  
ness 50

Even with a sister's woe. I knew  
What to the evil world is due,

And therefore sternly did refuse  
To link me with the infamy

Of one so lost as Helen. Now 55

Bewildered by my dire despair,  
Wondering I blush, and weep that  
thou

Should'st love me still,—thou only!  
—There,

Let us sit on that gray stone,  
Till our mournful talk be done. 60

*Helen.* Alas! not there; I cannot  
bear

The murmur of this lake to hear.  
A sound from there, Rosalind dear,

Which never yet I heard elsewhere  
But in our native land, recurs, 65

Even here where now we meet. It  
stirs

Too much of suffocating sorrow!  
In the dell of yon dark chestnut

wood  
Is a stone seat, a solitude

Less like our own. The ghost of  
Peace 70

Will not desert this spot. To-  
morrow,

If thy kind feelings should not  
cease,

We may sit here.  
*Rosalind.* Thou lead, my sweet,

And I will follow.  
*Henry.* 'Tis Fenici's seat

Where you are going? This is not  
the way, 75

Mamma; it leads behind those  
trees that grow

Close to the little river.  
*Helen.* Yes: I know:

I was bewildered. Kiss me, and be  
gay,

Dear boy: why do you sob?  
*Henry.* I do not know:

But it might break any one's heart  
to see 80

You and the lady cry so bitterly.  
*Helen.* It is a gentle child, my

friend. Go home,  
Henry, and play with Lilla till I

come.  
We only cried with joy to see each

other;  
We are quite merry now: Good-  
night.

The boy 85

Lifted a sudden look upon his  
mother,

And in the gleam of forced and  
hollow joy

Which lightened o'er her face,  
laughed with the glee

Of light and unsuspecting infancy,  
And whispered in her ear, 'Bring

home with you 90

That sweet strange lady-friend.'  
 Then off he flew,  
 But stopped, and beckoned with  
 a meaning smile,  
 Where the road turned. Pale Rosa-  
 lind the while,  
 Hiding her face, stood weeping  
 silently.

In silence then they took the way 95  
 Beneath the forest's solitude.  
 It was a vast and antique wood,  
 Thro' which they took their way;  
 And the gray shades of evening  
 O'er that green wilderness did  
 fling 100

Still deeper solitude.  
 Pursuing still the path that wound  
 The vast and knotted trees around  
 Through which slow shades were  
 wandering,  
 To a deep lawny dell they came,  
 To a stone seat beside a spring, 106  
 O'er which the columned wood did  
 frame

A roofless temple, like the fane  
 Where, ere new creeds could faith  
 obtain,  
 Man's early race once knelt be-  
 neath 110

The overhanging deity.  
 O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,  
 Now spangled with rare stars. The  
 snake,  
 The pale snake, that with eager  
 breath

Creeps here his noontide thirst to  
 slake, 115  
 Is beaming with many a mingled  
 hue,

Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,  
 When he floats on that dark and  
 lucid flood

In the light of his own loveliness;  
 And the birds that in the fountain  
 dip 120

Their plumes, with fearless fellow-  
 ship  
 Above and round him wheel and  
 hover.

The fitful wind is heard to stir  
 One solitary leaf on high;  
 The chirping of the grasshopper 125  
 Fills every pause. There is emotion  
 In all that dwells at noontide here:  
 Then, through the intricate wild  
 wood,

A maze of life and light and motion  
 Is woven. But there is stillness  
 now: 130

Gloom, and the trance of Nature  
 now:

The snake is in his cave asleep;  
 The birds are on the branches  
 dreaming:

Only the shadows creep: 134  
 Only the glow-worm is gleaming:  
 Only the owls and the nightingales  
 Wake in this dell when daylight  
 fails,

And gray shades gather in the  
 woods:

And the owls have all fled far away  
 In a merrier glen to hoot and  
 play, 140

For the moon is veiled and sleeping  
 now.

The accustomed nightingale still  
 broods

On her accustomed bough.  
 But she is mute; for her false mate  
 Has fled and left her desolate. 145

This silent spot tradition old  
 Had peopled with the spectral  
 dead.

For the roots of the speaker's hair  
 felt cold

And stiff, as with tremulous lips he  
 told

That a hellish shape at midnight  
 led 150

The ghost of a youth with hoary  
 hair,  
 And sate on the seat beside him  
 there,  
 Till a naked child came wandering  
 by,  
 When the fiend would change to a  
 lady fair!  
 A fearful tale! The truth was  
 worse: 155

For here a sister and a brother  
 Had solemnized a monstrous curse,  
 Meeting in this fair solitude:  
 For beneath yon very sky,  
 Had they resigned to one another  
 Body and soul. The multitude: 161  
 Tracking them to the secret wood,  
 Tore limb from limb their innocent  
 child,  
 And stabbed and trampled on its  
 mother;  
 But the youth, for God's most holy  
 grace, 165  
 A priest saved to burn in the  
 market-place.

Duly at evening Helen came  
 To this lone silent spot,  
 From the wrecks of a tale of wilder  
 sorrow

So much of sympathy to borrow 170  
 As soothed her own dark lot.

Duly each evening from her home,  
 With her fair child would Helen  
 come

To sit upon that antique seat, 174  
 While the hues of day were pale;  
 And the bright boy beside her feet  
 Now lay, lifting at intervals  
 His broad blue eyes on her;  
 Now, where some sudden impulse  
 calls

Following. He was a gentle boy 180  
 And in all gentle sports took  
 joy;

Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,  
 With a small feather for a sail,

His fancy on that spring would  
 float, 184

If some invisible breeze might stir  
 Its marble calm: and Helen smiled  
 Through tears of awe on the gay  
 child,

To think that a boy as fair as he,  
 In years which never more may be,  
 By that same fount, in that same  
 wood, 190

The like sweet fancies had pursued;  
 And that a mother, lost like her,  
 Had mournfully sate watching him.  
 Then all the scene was wont to swim  
 Through the mist of a burning  
 tear. 195

For many months had Helen known  
 This scene; and now she thither  
 turned

Her footsteps, not alone.  
 The friend whose falsehood she had  
 mourned,

Sate with her on that seat of stone.  
 Silent they sate; for evening, 201  
 And the power its glimpses bring  
 Had, with one awful shadow,  
 quelled

The passion of their grief. They  
 sate

With linkèd hands, for unre-  
 pelled 205

Had Helen taken Rosalind's.  
 Like the autumn wind, when it  
 unbinds

The tangled locks of the night-  
 shade's hair,

Which is twined in the sultry  
 summer air

Round the walls of an outworn  
 sepulchre, 210

Did the voice of Helen, sad and  
 sweet,

And the sound of her heart that  
 ever beat,

As with sighs and words she  
 breathed on her,

Unbind the knots of her friend's  
 despair,  
 Till her thoughts were free to float  
 and flow; 215  
 And from her labouring bosom  
 now,  
 Like the bursting of a prisoned  
 flame,  
 The voice of a long pent sorrow  
 came.

*Rosalind.* I saw the dark earth  
 fall upon  
 The coffin; and I saw the stone 220  
 Laid over him whom this cold  
 breast  
 Had pillowed to his nightly rest!  
 Thou knowest not, thou canst not  
 know

My agony. Oh! I could not weep:  
 The sources whence such blessings  
 flow 225

Were not to be approached by me!  
 But I could smile, and I could  
 sleep,

Though with a self-accusing heart.  
 In morning's light, in evening's  
 gloom,

I watched,—and would not thence  
 depart— 230

My husband's unlamented tomb.  
 My children knew their sire was  
 gone,

But when I told them,—‘he is  
 dead,’—

They laughed aloud in frantic glee,  
 They clapped their hands and  
 leaped about, 235

Answering each other's ecstasy  
 With many a prank and merry  
 shout.

But I sate silent and alone,  
 Wrapped in the mock of mourning  
 weed.

They laughed, for he was dead:  
 but I 240

Sate with a hard and tearless eye,

And with a heart which would  
 deny

The secret joy it could not quell,  
 Low muttering o'er his loathed  
 name;

Till from that self-contention  
 came 245

Remorse where sin was none; a hell  
 Which in pure spirits should not  
 dwell.

I'll tell thee truth. He was a man  
 Hard, selfish, loving only gold,  
 Yet full of guile: his pale eyes  
 ran 250

With tears, which each some false-  
 hood told,

And oft his smothered and bridled  
 tongue

Would give the lie to his flushing  
 cheek:

He was a coward to the strong:  
 He was a tyrant to the weak, 255

On whom his vengeance he would  
 wreak:

For scorn, whose arrows search the  
 heart,

From many a stranger's eye would  
 dart,

And on his memory cling, and fol-  
 low

His soul to its home so cold and  
 hollow. 260

He was a tyrant to the weak,  
 And we were such, alas the day!

Oft, when my little ones at play,  
 Were in youth's natural lightness  
 gay,

Or if they listened to some tale 265  
 Of travellers, or of fairy land,—

When the light from the wood-fire's  
 dying brand

Flashed on their faces,—if they  
 heard

Or thought they heard upon the  
 stair 269

His footstep, the suspended word  
 Died on my lips: we all grew pale:



The babe at my bosom was hushed  
     with fear  
 If it thought it heard its father  
     near;  
 And my two wild boys would near  
     my knee  
 Cling, cowed and cowering fear-  
     fully. 275

I'll tell thee truth: I loved another.  
 His name in my ear was ever  
     ringing,  
 His form to my brain was ever  
     clinging:  
 Yet if some stranger breathed that  
     name,  
 My lips turned white, and my heart  
     beat fast: 280  
 My nights were once haunted by  
     dreams of flame,  
 My days were dim in the shadow  
     cast

By the memory of the same!  
 Day and night, day and night,  
 He was my breath and life and  
     light, 285

For three short years, which soon  
     were passed.

On the fourth, my gentle mother  
 Led me to the shrine, to be  
 His sworn bride eternally.

And now we stood on the altar  
     stair, 290

When my father came from a dis-  
     tant land,

And with a loud and fearful cry  
 Rushed between us suddenly.

I saw the stream of his thin gray  
     hair,

I saw his lean and lifted hand, 295  
 And heard his words,—and live!  
     Oh God!

Wherefore do I live?—‘Hold,  
     hold!’

He cried,—‘I tell thee ’tis her  
     brother!

Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod

Of yon churchyard rests in her  
     shroud so cold: 300

I am now weak, and pale, and old:  
 We were once dear to one another,  
 I and that corpse! Thou art our  
     child!’

Then with a laugh both long and  
     wild 304

The youth upon the pavement fell:  
 They found him dead! All looked  
     on me,

The spasms of my despair to see:  
 But I was calm. I went away:

I was clammy-cold like clay! 309

I did not weep: I did not speak:  
 But day by day, week after week,  
 I walked about like a corpse alive!  
 Alas! sweet friend, you must be-  
     lieve

This heart is stone: it did not  
     break.

My father lived a little while, 315  
 But all might see that he was dying,  
 He smiled with such a woeful smile!  
 When he was in the churchyard  
     lying

Among the worms, we grew quite  
     poor,

So that no one would give us  
     bread: 320

My mother looked at me, and said  
 Faint words of cheer, which only  
     meant

That she could die and be content;  
 So I went forth from the same  
     church door

To another husband's bed. 325

And this was he who died at last,  
 When weeks and months and years  
     had passed,

Through which I firmly did fulfil  
 My duties, a devoted wife,

With the stern step of vanquished  
     will, 330

Walking beneath the night of life,  
 Whose hours extinguished, like  
     slow rain

Falling for ever, pain by pain,  
The very hope of death's dear rest;  
Which, since the heart within my  
breast 335

Of natural life was dispossessed,  
Its strange sustainer there had been.

Wher flowers were dead, and grass  
was green

Upon my mother's grave,—that  
mother

Whom to outlive, and cheer, and  
make 340

My wan eyes glitter for her sake,  
Was my vowed task, the single  
care

Which once gave life to my de-  
spair,—

When she was a thing that did not  
stir

And the crawling worms were  
cradling her 345

To a sleep more deep and so more  
sweet

Than a baby's rocked on its nurse's  
knee,

I lived: a living pulse then beat  
Beneath my heart that awakened  
me.

What was this pulse so warm and  
free? 350

Alas! I knew it could not be  
My own dull blood: 'twas like a  
thought

Of liquid love, that spread and  
wrought

Under my bosom and in my brain,  
And crept with the blood through  
every vein; 355

And hour by hour, day after day,  
The wonder could not charm away,  
But laid in sleep, my wakeful pain,  
Until I knew it was a child,

And then I wept. For long, long  
years 360

These frozen eyes had shed no  
tears:

But now—'twas the season fair and  
mild

When April has wept itself to May:  
I sate through the sweet sunny day  
By my window bowered round with  
leaves, 365

And down my cheeks the quick  
tears fell

Like twinkling rain-drops from the  
eaves,

When warm spring showers are  
passing o'er:

O Helen, none can ever tell

The joy it was to weep once  
more! 370

I wept to think how hard it were  
To kill my babe, and take from it  
The sense of light, and the warm  
air,

And my own fond and tender care,  
And love and smiles; ere I knew  
yet 375

That these for it might, as for me,  
Be the masks of a grinning mock-  
ery.

And haply, I would dream, 'twere  
sweet

To feed it from my faded breast,  
Or mark my own heart's restless  
beat 380

Rock it to its untroubled rest,  
And watch the growing soul be-  
neath

Dawn in faint smiles; and hear its  
breath,

Half interrupted by calm sighs,  
And search the depth of its fair  
eyes 385

For long departed memories!  
And so I lived till that sweet load  
Was lightened. Darkly forward  
flowed

The stream of years, and on it bore  
Two shapes of gladness to my  
sight; 390

Two other babes, delightful more

In my lost soul's abandoned night,  
Than their own country ships may  
be

Sailing towards wrecked mariners,  
Who cling to the rock of a wintry  
sea. 395

For each, as it came, brought soothing tears,  
And a loosening warmth, as each one lay

Sucking the sullen milk away  
About my frozen heart, did play,  
And weaned it, oh how pain-  
fully!— 400

As they themselves were weaned  
each one

From that sweet food,—even from  
the thirst

Of death, and nothingness, and  
rest.

Strange inmate of a living breast!  
Which all that I had undergone 405

Of grief and shame, since she, who  
first

The gates of that dark refuge  
closed,

Came to my sight, and almost burst  
The seal of that Lethean spring;  
But these fair shadows inter-  
posed: 410

For all delights are shadows now!  
And from my brain to my dull brow  
The heavy tears gather and flow:  
I cannot speak: Oh let me weep!

The tears which fell from her wan  
eyes 415

Glimmered among the moonlight  
dew:

Her deep hard sobs and heavy sighs  
Their echoes in the darkness threw.  
When she grew calm, she thus did  
keep

The tenor of her tale:

I know not how: he was not old,  
If age be numbered by its years:

But he was bowed and bent with  
fears,

Pale with the quenchless thirst of  
gold,

Which, like fierce fever, left him  
weak: 425

And his strait lip and bloated cheek  
Were warped in spasms by hollow  
sneers;

And selfish cares with barren  
plough,

Not age, had lined his narrow  
brow,

And foul and cruel thoughts, which  
feed 430

Upon the withering life within,  
Like vipers on some poisonous  
weed.

Whether his ill were death or sin  
None knew, until he died indeed,  
And then men owned they were the  
same. 435

Seven days within my chamber lay  
That corse, and my babes made  
holiday:

At last, I told them what is death:  
The eldest, with a kind of shame,  
Came to my knees with silent  
breath, 440

And sate awe-stricken at my feet;  
And soon the others left their play,  
And sate there too. It is unmeet  
To shed on the brief flower of youth  
The withering knowledge of the  
grave; 445

From me remorse then wrung that  
truth.

I could not bear the joy which gave  
Too just a response to mine own.  
In vain. I dared not feign a groan;  
And in their artless looks I saw, 450  
Between the mists of fear and awe,  
That my own thought was theirs;  
                    and they

Expressed it not in words, but said,  
Each in its heart, how every day

Will pass in happy work and play,  
Now he is dead and gone away. 456

After the funeral all our kin  
Assembled, and the will was read.  
My friend, I tell thee, even the dead  
Have strength, their putrid shrouds  
within, 460

To blast and torture. Those who  
live

Still fear the living, but a corse  
Is merciless, and power doth give  
To such pale tyrants half the spoil  
He rends from those who groan and  
toil, 465

Because they blush not with re-  
morse

Among their crawling worms. Be-  
hold,

I have no child! my tale grows old  
With grief, and staggers: let it  
reach

The limits of my feeble speech, 470  
And languidly at length recline  
On the brink of its own grave and  
mine.

Thou knowest what a thing is Pov-  
erty

Among the fallen on evil days:  
'Tis Crime, and Fear, and In-  
famy, 475

And houseless Want in frozen ways  
Wandering ungarmented, and Pain,  
And, worse than all, that inward  
stain

Foul Self-contempt, which drowns  
in sneers

Youth's starlight smile, and makes  
its tears 480

First like hot gall, then dry for  
ever!

And well thou knowest a mother  
never

Could doom her children to this ill,  
And well he knew the same. The  
will

Imported, that if e'er again 485  
I sought my children to behold,  
Or in my birthplace did remain  
Beyond three days, whose hours  
were told,

They should inherit nought: and  
he,

To whom next came their patri-  
mony, 490

A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold,  
Aye watched me, as the will was  
read,

With eyes askance, which sought  
to see

The secrets of my agony;  
And with close lips and anxious  
brow 495

Stood canvassing still to and fro  
The chance of my resolve, and all  
The dead man's caution just did  
call;

For in that killing lie 'twas said—  
'She is adulterous, and doth  
hold 500

In secret that the Christian creed  
Is false, and therefore is much need  
That I should have a care to save  
My children from eternal fire.'

Friend, he was sheltered by the  
grave, 505

And therefore dared to be a liar!  
In truth, the Indian on the pyre  
Of her dead husband, half con-  
sumed,

As well might there be false, as I  
To those abhorred embraces  
doomed, 510

Far worse than fire's brief agony.  
As to the Christian creed, if true  
Or false, I never questioned it:  
I took it as the vulgar do:

Nor my vexed soul had leisure  
yet 515

To doubt the things men say, or  
deem

That they are other than they  
seem.

All present who those crimes did  
hear,  
In feigned or actual scorn and fear,  
Men, women, children, slunk  
away, 520  
Whispering with self-contented  
pride,  
Which half suspects its own base  
lie.  
I spoke to none, nor did abide,  
But silently I went my way,  
Nor noticed I where joyously 525  
Sate my two younger babes at play,  
In the court-yard through which I  
passed;  
But went with footsteps firm and  
fast  
Till I came to the brink of the  
ocean green,  
And there, a woman with gray  
hairs, 530  
Who had my mother's servant  
been,  
Kneeling, with many tears and  
prayers,  
Made me accept a purse of gold,  
Half of the earnings she had kept  
To refuge her when weak and  
old. 535  
With woe, which never sleeps or  
slept,  
I wander now. 'Tis a vain  
thought—  
But on yon alp, whose snowy head  
'Mid the azure air is islanded,  
(We see it o'er the flood of  
cloud, 540  
Which sunrise from its eastern  
caves  
Drives, wrinkling into golden  
waves,  
Hung with its precipices proud,  
From that gray stone where first  
we met)  
There—now who knows the dead  
feel nought?— 545

Should be my grave; for he who yet  
Is my soul's soul, once said:  
' 'Twere sweet  
'Mid stars and lightnings to abide,  
And winds and lulling snows, that  
beat  
With their soft flakes the moun-  
tain wide, 550  
Where weary meteor lamps repose,  
And languid storms their pinions  
close:  
And all things strong and bright  
and pure,  
And ever during, aye endure:  
Who knows, if one were buried  
there, 555  
But these things might our spirits  
make,  
Amid the all-surrounding air,  
Their own eternity partake?'  
Then 'twas a wild and playful say-  
ing  
At which I laughed, or seemed to  
laugh: 560  
They were his words. now heed  
my praying,  
And let them be my epitaph.  
Thy memory for a term may be  
My monument. Wilt remember  
me?  
I know thou wilt, and canst for-  
give 565  
Whilst in this erring world to live  
My soul disdained not, that I  
thought  
Its lying forms were worthy aught  
And much less thee.  
*Helen.* O speak not so,  
But come to me and pour thy  
woe 570  
Into this heart, full though it be,  
Ay, overflowing with its own:  
I thought that grief had severed  
me  
From all beside who weep and  
groan;  
Its likeness upon earth to be, 575

Its express image; but thou art  
More wretched. Sweet! we will not  
part

Henceforth, if death be not divi-  
sion;

If so, the dead feel no contrition.

But wilt thou hear since last we  
parted 580

All that has left me broken hearted?

*Rosalind.* Yes, speak. The faint-  
est stars are scarcely shorn  
Of their thin beams by that delu-  
sive morn

Which sinks again in darkness, like  
the light

Of early love, soon lost in total  
night. 585

*Helen.* Alas! Italian winds are  
mild,

But my bosom is cold—wintry  
cold—

When the warm air weaves, among  
the fresh leaves,

Soft music, my poor brain is  
wild,

And I am weak like a nursling  
child, 590

Though my soul with grief is gray  
and old.

*Rosalind.* Weep not at thine own  
words, though they must  
make

Me weep. What is thy tale?

*Helen.* I fear 'twill shake  
Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou  
well

Rememberest when we met no  
more, 595

And, though I dwelt with Lionel,  
That friendless caution pierced me  
sore

With grief; a wound my spirit  
bore

Indignantly, but when he died  
With him lay dead both hope and  
pride. 600

Alas! all hope is buried now.

But then men dreamed the aged  
earth

Was labouring in that mighty birth,  
Which many a poet and a sage  
Has aye foreseen—the happy

age 605  
When truth and love shall dwell  
below

Among the works and ways of  
men;

Which on this world not power but  
will

Even now is wanting to fulfil.

Among mankind what thence be-  
fell 610

Of strife, how vain, is known too  
well;

When Liberty's dear paean fell  
'Mid murderous howls. To Lionel,  
Though of great wealth and line-  
age high,

Yet through those dungeon walls  
there came 615

Thy thrilling light, O Liberty!

And as the meteor's midnight  
flame

Startles the dreamer, sun-like truth  
Flashed on his visionary youth,  
And filled him, not with love, but  
faith, 620

And hope, and courage mute in  
death;

For love and life in him were  
twins,

Born at one birth: in every other  
First life then love its course be-  
gins,

Though they be children of one  
mother; 625

And so through this dark world  
they fleet

Divided, till in death they meet:

But he loved all things ever. Then  
He passed amid the strife of men,  
And stood at the throne of armed  
power 630

Pleading for a world of woe:  
 Secure as one on a rock-built tower  
 O'er the wrecks which the surge  
     trails to and fro,  
 'Mid the passions wild of human  
     kind  
 He stood, like a spirit calming  
     them; 635  
 For, it was said, his words could  
     bind  
 Like music the lulled crowd, and  
     stem  
 That torrent of unquiet dream,  
 Which mortals truth and reason  
     deem,  
 But is revenge and fear and  
     pride. 640  
 Joyous he was; and hope and peace  
 On all who heard him did abide,  
 Raining like dew from his sweet  
     talk,  
 As where the evening star may  
     walk 644  
 Along the brink of the gloomy seas,  
 Liquid mists of splendour quiver.  
 His very gestures touched to tears  
 The unpersuaded tyrant, never  
 So moved before: his presence  
     stung  
 The torturers with their victim's  
     pain, 650  
 And none knew how; and through  
     their ears,  
 The subtle witchcraft of his tongue  
 Unlocked the hearts of those who  
     keep  
 Gold, the world's bond of slavery.  
 Men wondered, and some sneered  
     to see 655  
 One sow what he could never reap:  
 For he is rich, they said, and  
     young,  
 And might drink from the depths  
     of luxury.  
 If he seeks Fame, Fame never  
     crowned  
 The champion of a trampled creed:

If he seeks Power, Power is en-  
     throned 661  
 'Mid ancient rights and wrongs, to  
     feed  
 Which hungry wolves with praise  
     and spoil,  
 Those who would sit near Power  
     must toil;  
 And such, there sitting, all may  
     see. 665  
 What seeks he? All that others seek  
 He casts away, like a vile weed  
 Which the sea casts unreturn-  
     ingly.  
 That poor and hungry men should  
     break  
 The laws which wreak them toil  
     and scorn, 670  
 We understand; but Lionel  
 We know is rich and nobly born.  
 So wondered they: yet all men  
     loved  
 Young Lionel, though few ap-  
     proved;  
 All but the priests, whose hatred  
     fell 675  
 Like the unseen blight of a smil-  
     ing day,  
 The withering honey dew, which  
     clings  
 Under the bright green buds of  
     May,  
 Whilst they unfold their emerald  
     wings:  
 For he made verses wild and queer  
 On the strange creeds priests hold  
     so dear, 681  
 Because they bring them land and  
     gold.  
 Of devils and saints and all such  
     gear,  
 He made tales which whoso heard  
     or read  
 Would laugh till he were almost  
     dead. 685  
 So this grew a proverb: 'Don't get  
     old

Till Lionel's "Banquet in Hell"  
 you hear,  
 And then you will laugh yourself  
 young again?  
 So the priests hated him, and he  
 Repaid their hate with cheerful  
 glee. 690

Ah, smiles and joyance quickly  
 died,  
 For public hope grew pale and dim  
 In an altered time and tide,  
 And in its wasting withered him,  
 As a summer flower that blows too  
 soon 695  
 Droops in the smile of the waning  
 moon,  
 When it scatters through an April  
 night  
 The frozen dews of wrinkling  
 blight.  
 None now hoped more. Gray  
 Power was seated  
 Safely on her ancestral throne; 700  
 And Faith, the Python, undefeated,  
 Even to its blood-stained steps  
 dragged on  
 Her foul and wounded train, and  
 men  
 Were trampled and deceived again,  
 And words and shows again could  
 bind 705  
 The wailing tribes of human kind  
 In scorn and famine. Fire and  
 blood  
 Raged round the raging multitude,  
 To fields remote by tyrants sent  
 To be the scornèd instrument 710  
 With which they drag from mines  
 of gore  
 The chains their slaves yet ever  
 wore:  
 And in the streets men met each  
 other,  
 And by old altars and in halls,  
 And smiled again at festivals, 715

But each man found in his heart's  
 brother  
 Cold cheer; for all, though half de-  
 ceived,  
 The outworn creeds again believed,  
 And the same round anew began,  
 Which the weary world yet ever  
 ran. 720  
 Many then wept, not tears, but  
 gall  
 Within their hearts, like drops  
 which fall  
 Wasting the fountain-stone away.  
 And in that dark and evil day  
 Did all desires and thoughts, that  
 claim 725  
 Men's care—ambition, friendship,  
 fame,  
 Love, hope, though hope was now  
 despair—  
 Indue the colours of this change,  
 As from the all-surrounding air  
 The earth takes hues obscure and  
 strange, 730  
 When storm and earthquake linger  
 there.  
 And so, my friend, it then befell  
 To many, most to Lionel,  
 Whose hope was like the life of  
 youth  
 Within him, and when dead, be-  
 came 735  
 A spirit of unresting flame,  
 Which goaded him in his distress  
 Over the world's vast wilderness.  
 Three years he left his native land,  
 And on the fourth, when he re-  
 turned, 740  
 None knew him: he was stricken  
 deep  
 With some disease of mind, and  
 turned  
 Into aught unlike Lionel.  
 On him, on whom, did he pause in  
 sleep, 744  
 Serenest smiles were wont to keep,  
 And, did he wake, a wingèd band



Of bright persuasions, which had  
fed

On his sweet lips and liquid eyes,  
Kept their swift pinions half out-  
spread,

To do on men his least com-  
mand; 750

On him, whom once 'twas paradise  
Even to behold, now misery lay:

In his own heart 'twas merciless,  
To all things else none may express  
Its innocence and tenderness. 755

'Twas said that he had refuge  
sought

In love from his unquiet thought  
In distant lands, and been deceived  
By some strange show; for there  
were found, 759

Blotted with tears as those relieved  
By their own words are wont to do,  
These mournful verses on the  
ground,

By all who read them blotted too.

'How am I changed! my hopes  
were once like fire:

I loved, and I believed that life  
was love. 765

How am I lost! on wings of swift  
desire

Among Heaven's winds my spirit  
once did move.

I slept, and silver dreams did aye  
inspire

My liquid sleep: I woke, and did  
approve

All nature to my heart, and thought  
to make 770

A paradise of earth for one sweet  
sake.

'I love, but I believe in love no  
more.

I feel desire, but hope not. O, from  
sleep

Most vainly must my weary brain  
implore

Its long lost flattery now: I wake  
to weep, 775

And sit through the long day gnaw-  
ing the core

Of my bitter heart, and, like a  
miser, keep,

Since none in what I feel take pain  
or pleasure,

To my own soul its self-consuming  
treasure.'

He dwelt beside me near the  
sea: 780

And oft in evening did we meet,  
When the waves, beneath the star-  
light, flee

O'er the yellow sands with silver  
feet,

And talked: our talk was sad and  
sweet,

Till slowly from his mien there  
passed 785

The desolation which it spoke;  
And smiles,—as when the light-  
ning's blast

Has parched some heaven-delight-  
ing oak,

The next spring shows leaves pale  
and rare, 789

But like flowers delicate and fair,  
On its rent boughs,—again arrayed  
His countenance in tender light:

His words grew subtle fire, which  
made

The air his hearers breathed de-  
light:

His motions, like the winds, were  
free, 795

Which bend the bright grass grace-  
fully,

Then fade away in circlets faint:  
And winged Hope, on which up-  
borne

His soul seemed hovering in his  
eyes, 799

Like some bright spirit newly born

Floating amid the sunny skies,  
 Sprang forth from his rent heart  
     anew.  
 Yet o'er his talk, and looks, and  
     mien,  
 Tempering their loveliness too  
     keen,  
 Past woe its shadow backward  
     threw, 805  
 Till like an exhalation, spread  
 From flowers half drunk with eve-  
     ning dew,  
 They did become infectious: sweet  
 And subtle mists of sense and  
     thought:  
 Which wrapped us soon, when we  
     might meet, 810  
 Almost from our own looks and  
     aught  
 The wide world holds. And so, his  
     mind  
 Was healed, while mine grew sick  
     with fear:  
 For ever now his health declined,  
 Like some frail bark which cannot  
     bear 815  
 The impulse of an altered wind,  
 Though prosperous: and my heart  
     grew full  
 'Mid its new joy of a new care:  
 For his cheek became, not pale, but  
     fair,  
 As rose-o'ershadowed lilies are; 820  
 And soon his deep and sunny hair,  
 In this alone less beautiful,  
 Like grass in tombs grew wild and  
     rare.  
 The blood in his translucent veins  
 Beat, not like animal life, but love  
 Seemed now its sullen springs to  
     move, 826  
 When life had failed, and all its  
     pains:  
 And sudden sleep would seize him  
     oft  
 Like death, so calm, but that a tear,  
 His pointed eyelashes between, 830

Would gather in the light serene  
 Of smiles, whose lustre bright and  
     soft  
 Beneath lay undulating there.  
 His breath was like inconstant  
     flame,  
 As eagerly it went and came; 835  
 And I hung o'er him in his sleep,  
 Till, like an image in the lake  
 Which rains disturb, my tears  
     would break  
 Then he would bid me not to  
     weep, 840  
 The shadow of that slumber deep:  
 And say with flattery false, yet  
     sweet,  
 That death and he could never  
     meet,  
 If I would never part with him.  
 And so we loved, and did unite  
 All that in us was yet divided: 845  
 For when he said, that many a rite,  
 By men to bind but once provided,  
 Could not be shared by him and  
     me,  
 Or they would kill him in their  
     glee,  
 I shuddered, and then laughing  
     said— 850  
 'We will have rites our faith to  
     bind,  
 But our church shall be the starry  
     night,  
 Our altar the grassy earth out-  
     spread,  
 And our priest the muttering  
     wind.'  
 'Twas sunset as I spoke: one  
     star 855  
 Had scarce burst forth, when from  
     afar  
 The ministers of misrule sent,  
 Seized upon Lionel, and bore  
 His chained limbs to a dreary  
     tower,  
 In the midst of a city vast and  
     wide

For he, they said, from his mind  
had bent 861

Against their gods keen blasphemy,  
For which, though his soul must  
roasted be

In hell's red lakes immortally,  
Yet even on earth must he abide 865

The vengeance of their slaves: a  
trial,

I think, men call it. What avail  
Are prayers and tears, which chase  
denial

From the fierce savage, nursed in  
hate?

What the knit soul that pleading  
and pale 870

Makes wan the quivering cheek,  
which late

It painted with its own delight?  
We were divided. As I could,

I stilled the tingling of my blood,  
And followed him in their de-  
spite, 875

As a widow follows, pale and wild,  
The murderers and corse of her  
only child;

And when we came to the prison  
door

And I prayed to share his dungeon  
floor

With prayers which rarely have  
been spurned, 880

And when men drove me forth  
and I

Stared with blank frenzy on the  
sky,

A farewell look of love he turned,  
Half calming me; then gazed  
awhile,

As if thro' that black and massy  
pile, 885

And thro' the crowd around him  
there,

And thro' the dense and murky air,  
And the thronged streets, he did  
esp

What poets know and prophesy;

And said, with voice that made  
them shiver 890

And clung like music in my brain,  
And which the mute walls spoke  
again

Prolonging it with deepened  
strain:

'Fear not the tyrants shall rule for  
ever,

Or the priests of the bloody  
faith; 895

They stand on the brink of that  
mighty river,

Whose waves they have tainted  
with death:

It is fed from the depths of a thou-  
sand dells,

Around them it foams, and rages,  
and swells,

And their swords and their scept-  
res I floating see, 900

Like wrecks in the surge of eter-  
nity.'

I dwelt beside the prison gate,  
And the strange crowd that out and  
in

Passed, some, no doubt, with mine  
own fate,

Might have fretted me with its  
ceaseless din, 905

But the fever of care was louder  
within.

Soon, but too late, in penitence  
Or fear, his foes released him  
thence:

I saw his thin and languid form,  
As leaning on the jailor's arm, 910

Whose hardened eyes grew moist  
the while,

To meet his mute and faded  
smile,

And hear his words of kind fare-  
well,

He tottered forth from his damp-  
cell.

Many had never wept before, 915

From whom fast tears then gushed  
     and fell:  
 Many will relent no more,  
 Who sobbed like infants then: aye,  
     all  
 Who thronged the prison's stony  
     hall,  
 The rulers or the slaves of law, 920  
 Felt with a new surprise and awe  
 That they were human, till strong  
     shame  
 Made them again become the same.  
 The prison blood-hounds, huge  
     and grim,  
 From human looks the infection  
     caught, 925  
 And fondly crouched and fawned  
     on him;  
 And men have heard the prisoners  
     say,  
 Who in their rotting dungeons lay,  
 That from that hour, throughout  
     one day,  
 The fierce despair and hate which  
     kept 930  
 Their trampled bosoms almost  
     slept:  
 Where, like twin vultures, they  
     hung feeding  
 On each heart's wound, wide torn  
     and bleeding,—  
 Because their jailors' rule, they  
     thought, 934  
 Grew merciful, like a parent's sway.  
  
 I know not how, but we were free:  
 And Lionel sate alone with me,  
 As the carriage drove thro' the  
     streets apace;  
 And we looked upon each other's  
     face;  
 And the blood in our fingers inter-  
     twined 940  
 Ran like the thoughts of a single  
     mind,  
 As the swift emotions went and  
     came

Thro' the veins of each united  
     frame.  
 So thro' the long long streets we  
     passed  
 Of the million-peopled City vast;  
 Which is that desert, where each  
     one 946  
 Seeks his mate yet is alone,  
 Beloved and sought and mourned  
     of none;  
 Until the clear blue sky was seen,  
 And the grassy meadows bright  
     and green, 950  
 And then I sunk in his embrace,  
 Enclosing there a mighty space  
 Of love: and so we travelled on  
 By woods, and fields of yellow  
     flowers,  
 And towns, and villages, and tow-  
     ers,  
 Day after day of happy hours. 956  
 It was the azure time of June,  
 When the skies are deep in the  
     stainless noon,  
 And the warm and fitful breezes  
     shake  
 The fresh green leaves of the hedge-  
     row briar, 960  
 And there were odours then to  
     make  
 The very breath we did respire  
 A liquid element, whereon  
 Our spirits, like delighted things  
 That walk the air on subtle wings,  
 Floated and mingled far away, 966  
 'Mid the warm winds of the sunny  
     day.  
 And when the evening star came  
     forth  
 Above the curve of the new bent  
     moon,  
 And light and sound ebbed from  
     the earth, 970  
 Like the tide of the full and weary  
     sea  
 To the depths of its tranquillity,  
 Our natures to its own repose

Did the earth's breathless sleep at-  
tune:

Like flowers, which on each other  
close 975

Their languid leaves when day-  
light's gone,

We lay, till new emotions came,  
Which seemed to make each mortal  
frame

One soul of interwoven flame,  
A life in life, a second birth 980

In worlds diviner far than earth,  
Which, like two strains of harmony  
That mingle in the silent sky

Then slowly disunite, passed by  
And left the tenderness of tears, 985

A soft oblivion of all fears,  
A sweet sleep: so we travelled on  
Till we came to the home of Lionel,  
Among the mountains wild and  
lone,

Beside the hoary western sea, 990  
Which near the verge of the echo-  
ing shore

The massy forest shadowed o'er.

The ancient steward, with hair all  
hoar,

As we alighted, wept to see  
His master changed so fearfully;  
And the old man's sobs did waken  
me 996

From my dream of unremaining  
gladness;

The truth flashed o'er me like quick  
madness

When I looked, and saw that there  
was death

On Lionel: yet day by day 1000  
He lived, till fear grew hope and  
faith,

And in my soul I dared to say,  
Nothing so bright can pass away:  
Death is dark, and foul, and dull,  
But he is—O how beautiful! 1005  
Yet day by day he grew more  
weak.

And his sweet voice, when he might  
speak,

Which ne'er was loud, became more  
low;

And the light which flashed through  
his waxen cheek

Grew faint, as the rose-like hues  
which flow 1010

From sunset o'er the Alpine snow:  
And death seemed not like death  
in him,

For the spirit of life o'er every limb  
Lingered, a mist of sense and  
thought.

When the summer wind faint  
odours brought 1015

From mountain flowers, even as it  
passed

His cheek would change, as the  
noonday sea

Which the dying breeze sweeps fit-  
fully.

If but a cloud the sky o'ercast,  
You might see his colour come and  
go, 1020

And the softest strain of music  
made

Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and  
fade

Amid the dew of his tender eyes;  
And the breath, with intermitting  
flow,

Made his pale lips quiver and part.  
You might hear the beatings of his  
heart, 1026

Quick, but not strong; and with my  
tresses

When oft he playfully would bind  
In the bowers of mossy lonelineses  
His neck, and win me so to mingle  
In the sweet depth of woven ca-  
resses,

And our faint limbs were inter-  
twined, 1032

Alas! the quiet life did tingle  
From mine own heart through every  
vein,

|                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Like a captive in dreams of liberty,<br>Who beats the walls of his stony<br>cell. 1036                                                        | Into its side-convulsing heart. 1065<br>An unskilled hand, yet one in-<br>formed                                                                                                                  |
| But his, it seemed already free,<br>Like the shadow of fire surround-<br>ing me!                                                              | With genius, had the marble<br>warmed                                                                                                                                                             |
| On my faint eyes and limbs did<br>dwell                                                                                                       | With that pathetic life. This tale<br>It told: A dog had from the sea,<br>When the tide was raging fearfully,<br>Dragged Lionel's mother, weak and<br>pale, 1071                                  |
| That spirit as it passed, till soon,<br>As a frail cloud wandering o'er the<br>moon, 1041                                                     | Then died beside her on the sand,<br>And she that temple thence had<br>planned;                                                                                                                   |
| Beneath its light invisible,<br>Is seen when it folds its gray wings<br>again                                                                 | But it was Lionel's own hand<br>Had wrought the image. Each new<br>moon 1075                                                                                                                      |
| To alight on midnight's dusky<br>plain,                                                                                                       | That lady did, in this lone fane,<br>The rites of a religion sweet,<br>Whose god was in her heart and<br>brain;                                                                                   |
| I lived and saw, and the gathering<br>soul                                                                                                    | The season's loveliest flowers were<br>strewn                                                                                                                                                     |
| Passed from beneath that strong<br>control, 1046                                                                                              | On the marble floor beneath her<br>feet,                                                                                                                                                          |
| And I fell on a life which was sick<br>with fear                                                                                              | And she brought crowns of sea-<br>buds white, 1081                                                                                                                                                |
| Of all the woe that now I bear.                                                                                                               | Whose odour is so sweet and faint,<br>And weeds, like branching chryso-<br>lite,                                                                                                                  |
| Amid a bloomless myrtle wood,<br>On a green and sea-girt promon-<br>tory,                                                                     | Woven in devices fine and quaint.<br>And tears from her brown eyes did<br>stain 1085                                                                                                              |
| Not far from where we dwelt, there<br>stood 1051                                                                                              | The altar: need but look upon<br>That dying statue fair and wan,<br>If tears should cease, to weep again:<br>And rare Arabian odours came,<br>Through the myrtle copses steam-<br>ing thence 1090 |
| In record of a sweet sad story,<br>An altar and a temple bright<br>Circled by steps, and o'er the gate<br>Was sculptured, 'To Fidelity;' 1055 | From the hissing frankincense,<br>Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean<br>foam,                                                                                                                       |
| And in the shrine an image sate,<br>All veiled: but there was seen the<br>light                                                               | Hung in dense flocks beneath the<br>dome—                                                                                                                                                         |
| Of smiles, which faintly could<br>express                                                                                                     | That ivory dome, whose azure night<br>With golden stars, like heaven, was<br>bright— 1095                                                                                                         |
| A mingled pain and tenderness<br>Through that ethereal drapery. 1060                                                                          | O'er the split cedar's pointed flame;                                                                                                                                                             |
| The left hand held the head, the<br>right—                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Beyond the veil, beneath the skin,<br>You might see the nerves quivering<br>within—                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Was forcing the point of a barbèd<br>dart                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

And the lady's harp would kindle  
there  
The melody of an old air,  
Softer than sleep; the villagers  
Mixed their religion up with hers,  
And as they listened round, shed  
tears. 1101

One eve he led me to this fane:  
Daylight on its last purple cloud  
Was lingering gray, and soon her  
strain 1104

The nightingale began; now loud,  
Climbing in circles the windless sky,  
Now dying music; suddenly  
'Tis scattered in a thousand notes,  
And now to the hushed ear it floats  
Like field smells known in in-  
fancy, 1110

Then failing, soothes the air again.  
We sate within that temple lone,  
Pavilioned round with Parian  
stone:

His mother's harp stood near, and  
oft

I had awakened music soft 1115  
Amid its wires: the nightingale  
Was pausing in her heaven-taught  
tale:

'Now drain the cup,' said Lionel,  
'Which the poet-bird has crowned  
so well

With the wine of her bright and  
liquid song! 1120

Heardst thou not sweet words  
among

That heaven-resounding min-  
strelsy?

Heardst thou not, that those who  
die

Awaken in a world of ecstasy?  
That love, when limbs are inter-  
woven, 1125

And sleep, when the night of life  
is cloven,

And thought, to the world's dim  
boundaries clinging,

And music, when one beloved is  
singing,  
Is death? Let us drain right joy-  
ously

The cup which the sweet bird fills  
for me.' 1130

He paused, and to my lips he bent  
His own: like spirit his words went  
Through all my limbs with the  
speed of fire;

And his keen eyes, glittering  
through mine,

Filled me with the flame  
divine, 1135

Which in their orbs was burning  
far,

Like the light of an unmeasured  
star,

In the sky of midnight dark and  
deep:

Yes, 'twas his soul that did inspire  
Sounds, which my skill could ne'er  
awaken; 1140

And first, I felt my fingers sweep  
The harp, and a long quivering cry  
Burst from my lips in symphony:

The dusk and solid air was shaken,  
As swift and swifter the notes  
came 1145

From my touch, that wandered like  
quick flame,

And from my bosom, labouring  
With some unutterable thing:

The awful sound of my own voice  
made

My faint lips tremble; in some  
mood 1150

Of wordless thought Lionel stood  
So pale that even beside his cheek  
The snowy column from its shade  
Caught whiteness: yet his counte-  
nance

Raised upward, burned with radi-  
ance 1155

Of spirit-piercing joy, whose light,  
Like the moon struggling through  
the night

Of whirlwind-rifted clouds, did  
break

With beams that might not be con-  
fined.

I paused, but soon his gestures  
kindled 1160

New power, as by the moving wind  
The waves are lifted, and my song  
To low soft notes now changed and  
dwindled,

And from the twinkling wires  
among,

My languid fingers drew and flung  
Circles of life-dissolving sound, 1166

Yet faint; in æry rings they bound  
My Lionel, who, as every strain

Grew fainter but more sweet, his  
mien

Sunk with the sound relaxed-  
ly; 1170

And slowly now he turned to me,  
As slowly faded from his face

That awful joy: with looks serene  
He was soon drawn to my embrace,

And my wild song then died away  
In murmurs: words I dare not say

We mixed, and on his lips mine fed  
Till they methought felt still and  
cold:

'What is it with thee, love?' I said:  
No word, no look, no motion! yes,

There was a change, but spare to  
guess, 1181

Nor let that moment's hope be told.  
I looked, and knew that he was  
dead,

And fell, as the eagle on the plain  
Falls when life deserts her

brain, 1185

And the mortal lightning is veiled  
again.

O that I were now dead! but such  
(Did they not, love, demand too  
much,

Those dying murmurs?) he for-  
bade.'

O that I once again were mad! 1190  
And yet, dear Rosalind, not so,

For I would live to share thy woe.  
Sweet boy, did I forget thee too?

Alas, we know not what we do  
When we speak words.

No memory more 1195  
Is in my mind of that sea shore.

Madness came on me, and a troop  
Of misty shapes did seem to sit

Beside me, on a vessel's poop,  
And the clear north wind was driv-  
ing it. 1200

Then I heard strange tongues, and  
saw strange flowers,

And the stars methought grew un-  
like ours,

And the azure sky and the storm-  
less sea

Made me believe that I had died,  
And waked in a world, which was  
to me 1205

Drear hell, though heaven to all  
beside;

Then a dead sleep fell on my mind.  
Whilst animal life many long years  
Had rescue from a chasm of tears;

And when I woke, I wept to  
find 1210

That the same lady, bright and  
wise,

With silver locks and quick brown  
eyes,

The mother of my Lionel,  
Had tended me in my distress,

And died some months before. Nor  
less 1215

Wonder, but far more peace and joy  
Brought in that hour my lovely  
boy;

For through that trance my soul  
had well

The impress of thy being kept;  
And if I waked, or if I slept, 1220

No doubt, though memory faithless  
be,

Thy image ever dwelt on me;



And thus, O Lionel, like thee  
 Is our sweet child. 'Tis sure most  
     strange  
 I knew not of so great a  
     change, 1225  
 As that which gave him birth, who  
     now  
 Is all the solace of my woe.

That Lionel great wealth had left  
 By will to me, and that of all  
 The ready lies of law bereft 1230  
 My child and me, might well befall.  
 But let me think not of the scorn,  
 Which from the meanest I have  
     borne,  
 When, for my child's belovèd sake,  
 I mixed with slaves, to vindi-  
     cate 1235  
 The very laws themselves do make:  
 Let me not say scorn is my fate,  
 Lest I be proud, suffering the same  
 With those who live in deathless  
     fame.

She ceased.—'Lo, where red morn-  
     ing thro' the woods 1240  
 Is burning o'er the dew;' said  
     Rosalind.  
 And with these words they rose, and  
     towards the flood  
 Of the blue lake, beneath the leaves  
     now wind  
 With equal steps and fingers inter-  
     twined:  
 Thence to a lonely dwelling, where  
     the shore 1245  
 Is shadowed with deep rocks, and  
     cypresses  
 Cleave with their dark green cones  
     the silent skies,  
 And with their shadows the clear  
     depths below,  
 And where a little terrace from its  
     bowers,  
 Of blooming myrtle and faint  
     lemon-flowers, 1250

Scatters its sense-dissolving fra-  
     grance o'er  
 The liquid marble of the windless  
     lake;  
 And where the agèd forest's limbs  
     look hoar,  
 Under the leaves which their green  
     garments make,  
 They come: 'tis Helen's home, and  
     clean and white, 1255  
 Like one which tyrants spare on our  
     own land  
 In some such solitude, its casements  
     bright  
 Shone through their vine-leaves in  
     the morning sun,  
 And even within 'twas scarce like  
     Italy.  
 And when she saw how all things  
     there were planned, 1260  
 As in an English home, dim  
     memory  
 Disturbed poor Rosalind: she stood  
     as one  
 Whose mind is where his body can-  
     not be,  
 Till Helen led her where her child  
     yet slept,  
 And said, 'Observe, that brow was  
     Lionel's, 1265  
 Those lips were his, and so he ever  
     kept  
 One arm in sleep, pillowing his head  
     with it.  
 You cannot see his eyes, they are  
     two wells  
 Of liquid love: let us not wake him  
     yet.'  
 But Rosalind could bear no more,  
     and wept 1270  
 A shower of burning tears, which  
     fell upon  
 His face, and so his opening lashes  
     shone  
 With tears unlike his own, as he did  
     leap

In sudden wonder from his innocent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived together

Thenceforth, changed in all else,  
yet friends again, 1276

Such as they were, when o'er the mountain heather

They wandered in their youth,  
through sun and rain.

And after many years, for human things

Change even like the ocean and the wind, 1280

Her daughter was restored to Rosalind,

And in their circle thence some visitings

Of joy 'mid their new calm would intervene:

A lovely child she was, of looks serene,

And motions which o'er things indifferent shed 1285

The grace and gentleness from whence they came.

And Helen's boy grew with her, and they fed

From the same flowers of thought, until each mind

Like springs which mingle in one flood became,

And in their union soon their parents saw 1290

The shadow of the peace denied to them.

And Rosalind, for when the living-stem

Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall,

Died ere her time; and with deep grief and awe

The pale survivors followed her remains 1295

Beyond the region of dissolving rains,

Up the cold mountain she was wont to call

Her tomb; and on Chiavenna's precipice

They raised a pyramid of lasting ice,

Whose polished sides, ere day had yet begun, 1300

Caught the first glow of the unrisen sun,

The last, when it had sunk; and thro' the night

The charioteers of Arctos wheelèd round

Its glittering point, as seen from Helen's home,

Whose sad inhabitants each year would come, 1305

With willing steps climbing that rugged height,

And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound

With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime's despite,

Filled the frore air with unaccustomed light:

Such flowers, as in the wintry memory bloom 1310

Of one friend left, adorned that frozen tomb.

Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould,

Whose sufferings too were less, Death slower led

Into the peace of his dominion cold:

She died among her kindred, being old. 1315

And know, that if love die not in the dead

As in the living, none of mortal kind

Are blest, as now Helen and Rosalind.

## NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY

*Rosalind and Helen* was begun at Marlow, and thrown aside—till I found it; and, at my request, it was completed. Shelley had no care for any of his poems that did not emanate from the depths of his mind and develop some high or abstruse truth. When he does touch on human life and the human heart, no pictures can be more faithful, more delicate, more subtle, or more pathetic. He never mentioned Love but he shed a grace borrowed from his own nature, that scarcely any other poet has bestowed, on that passion. When he spoke of it as the law of life, which inasmuch as we rebel against we err and injure ourselves and others, he promulgated that which he considered an irrefragable truth. In his eyes it was the essence of our being, and all woe and pain arose from the war made against it by selfishness, or insensibility, or mistake. By reverting in his mind to this first principle, he discovered the source of many emotions, and could disclose the secrets of all hearts; and his delineations of passion and emotion touch the finest chords of our nature.

*Rosalind and Helen* was finished during the summer of 1818, while we were at the baths of Lucca.

## JULIAN AND MADDALO

## A CONVERSATION

## PREFACE

The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme,  
The goats with the green leaves of budding Spring,  
Are saturated not—nor Love with tears.—VIRGIL'S *Gallus*.

COUNT MADDALO is a Venetian nobleman of ancient family and of great fortune, who, without mixing much in the society of his countrymen, resides chiefly at his magnificent palace in that city. (He is a person of the most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country.) But it is his weakness to be proud: he derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects that surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men; and, instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength. His ambition preys upon itself, for want of objects which it can consider worthy of exertion. I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentrated and impatient feelings which consume him; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no human being can be more gentle, patient, and unassuming than Maddalo. He is cheerful, frank, and witty. His more serious conversation

is a sort of intoxication; men are held by it as by a spell. He has travelled much; and there is an inexpressible charm in his relation of his adventures in different countries.

Julian is an Englishman of good family, passionately attached to those philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvements of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may be yet susceptible. Without concealing the evil in the world, he is for ever speculating how good may be made superior. He is a complete infidel, and a scoffer at all things reputed holy; and Maddalo takes a wicked pleasure in drawing out his taunts against religion. What Maddalo thinks on these matters is not exactly known. Julian, in spite of his heterodox opinions, is conjectured by his friends to possess some good qualities. How far this is possible the pious reader will determine. Julian is rather serious.

Of the Maniac I can give no information. He seems, by his own account, to have been disappointed in love. He was evidently a very cultivated and amiable person when in his right senses. His story, told at length, might be like many other stories of the same kind: the unconnected exclamations of his agony will perhaps be found a sufficient comment for the text of every heart.

I RODE one evening with Count Maddalo  
 Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow  
 Of Adria towards Venice: a bare strand  
 Of hillocks, heaped from ever-shifting sand,  
 Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds, 5  
 Such as from earth's embrace the salt ooze breeds,  
 Is this; an uninhabited sea-side,  
 Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,  
 Abandons; and no other object breaks  
 The waste, but one dwarf tree and some few stakes 10  
 Broken and unrepaired, and the tide makes  
 A narrow space of level sand thereon,  
 Where 'twas our wont to ride while day went down.  
 This ride was my delight (I love all waste  
 And solitary places) where we taste 15  
 The pleasure of believing what we see  
 Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:  
 And such was this wide ocean (and this shore  
 More barren than its billows) and yet more  
 Than all, with a remembered friend I love 20  
 To ride as then I rode;—for the winds drove  
 The living spray along the sunny air  
 Into our faces; the blue heavens were bare,  
 Stripped to their depths by the awakening north;  
 And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth 25

Harmonising with solitude, and sent  
 Into our hearts aéreal merriment.  
 So, as we rode, we talked; and the swift thought,  
 Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,  
 But flew from brain to brain,—such glee was ours, 30  
 Charged with light memories of remembered hours,  
 None slow enough for sadness: till we came  
 Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame.  
 This day had been cheerful but cold, and now  
 The sun was sinking, and the wind also. 35  
 Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be  
 Talk interrupted with such raillery  
 As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn  
 The thoughts it would extinguish:—'twas forlorn,  
 Yet pleasing, such as once, so poets tell, 40  
 The devils held within the dales of Hell  
 Concerning God, freewill and destiny:  
 Of all that earth has been or yet may be,  
 All that vain men imagine or believe,  
 Or hope can paint or suffering may achieve, 45  
 We descanted, and I (for ever still  
 Is it not wise to make the best of ill?)  
 Argued against despondency, but pride  
 Made my companion take the darker side.  
 The sense that he was greater than his kind 50  
 Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind  
 By gazing on its own exceeding light.  
 Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight,  
 Over the horizon of the mountains:—Oh,  
 How beautiful is sunset, when the glow 55  
 Of Heaven descends upon a land like thee,  
 Thou Paradise of exiles, Italy!  
 Thy mountains, seas, and vineyards, and the towers  
 Of cities they encircle!—it was ours  
 To stand on thee, beholding it: and then, 60  
 Just where we had dismounted, the Count's men  
 Were waiting for us with the gondola.—  
 As those who pause on some delightful way  
 Though bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood  
 Looking upon the evening, and the flood 65  
 Which lay between the city and the shore,  
 Paved with the image of the sky . . . the hoar  
 And aëry Alps towards the North appeared  
 Through mist, an heaven-sustaining bulwark reared  
 Between the East and West; and half the sky 70  
 Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry

Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew  
 Down the steep West into a wondrous hue  
 Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent 75  
 Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent  
 Among the many-folded hills: they were  
 Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,  
 As seen from Lido thro' the harbour piles,  
 The likeness of a clump of peaked isles—  
 And then—as if the Earth and Sea had been 80  
 Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen  
 Those mountains towering as from waves of flame  
 Around the vaporous sun, from which there came  
 The inmost purple spirit of light, and made,  
 Their very peaks transparent. 'Ere it fade,' 85  
 Said my companion, 'I will show you soon  
 A better station'—so, o'er the lagune  
 We glided; and from that funereal bark  
 I leaned, and saw the city, and could mark  
 How from their many isles, in evening's gleam, 90  
 Its temples and its palaces did seem  
 Like fabrics of enchantment piled to Heaven.  
 I was about to speak, when—'We are even  
 Now at the point I meant,' said Maddalo,  
 And bade the gondolieri cease to row. 95  
 'Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well  
 If you hear not a deep and heavy bell.'  
 I looked, and saw between us and the sun  
 A building on an island; such a one  
 As age to age might add, for uses vile, 100  
 A windowless, deformed and dreary pile;  
 And on the top an open tower, where hung  
 A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung;  
 We could just hear its hoarse and iron tongue:  
 The broad sun sunk behind it, and it tolled 105  
 In strong and black relief.—'What we behold  
 Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower,'  
 Said Maddalo, 'and ever at this hour  
 Those who may cross the water, hear that bell  
 Which calls the maniacs, each one from his cell, 110  
 To vespers.'—'As much skill as need to pray  
 In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they  
 To their stern maker,' I replied. 'O ho!  
 You talk as in years past,' said Maddalo.  
 'Tis strange men change not. You were ever still 115  
 Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,  
 A wolf for the meek lambs—if you can't swim  
 Beware of Providence.' I looked on him,

But the gay smile had faded in his eye.  
 'And such,'—he cried, 'is our mortality, 120  
 And this must be the emblem and the sign  
 Of what should be eternal and divine!—  
 And like that black and dreary bell, the soul,  
 Hung in a heaven-illuminated tower, must toll  
 Our thoughts and our desires to meet below 125  
 Round the rent heart and pray—as madmen do  
 For what? they know not,—till the night of death  
 As sunset that strange vision, severeth  
 Our memory from itself, and us from all  
 We sought and yet were baffled.' I recall 130  
 The sense of what he said, although I mar  
 The force of his expressions. The broad star  
 Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill,  
 And the black bell became invisible,  
 And the red tower looked gray, and all between 135  
 The churches, ships and palaces were seen  
 Huddled in gloom;—into the purple sea  
 The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.  
 We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola  
 Conveyed me to my lodging by the way. 140  
 The following morn was rainy, cold and dim:  
 Ere Maddalo arose, I called on him,  
 And whilst I waited with his child I played;  
 A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made,  
 A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being, 145  
 Graceful without design and unforeseeing,  
 With eyes—Oh speak not of her eyes!—which seem  
 Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam  
 With such deep meaning, as we never see  
 But in the human countenance: with me 150  
 She was a special favourite: I had nursed  
 Her fine and feeble limbs when she came first  
 To this bleak world; and she yet seemed to know  
 On second sight her ancient playfellow,  
 Less changed than she was by six months or so; 155  
 For after her first shyness was worn out  
 We sate there, rolling billiard balls about,  
 When the Count entered. Salutations past—  
 'The word you spoke last night might well have cast  
 A darkness on my spirit—if man be 160  
 The passive thing you say, I should not see  
 Much harm in the religions and old saws  
 (Tho' I may never own such leaden laws)  
 Which break a teachless nature to the yoke:  
 Mine is another faith'—thus much I spoke 165

And noting he replied not, added: ('See  
 This lovely child, blithe, innocent and free;  
 She spends a happy time with little care,  
 While we to such sick thoughts subjected are 170  
 As came on you last night—it is our will  
 That thus enchains us to permitted ill—  
 We might be otherwise—we might be all  
 We dream of happy, high, majestic.  
 Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek  
 But in our mind? and if we were not weak 175  
 Should we be less in deed than in desire?'  
 'Ay, if we were not weak—and we aspire  
 How vainly to be strong!' said Maddalo:  
 'You talk Utopia.' 'It remains to know,'  
 I then rejoined, 'and those who try may find 180  
 How strong the chains are which our spirit bind;  
 Brittle perchance as straw' . . . We are assured  
 Much may be conquered, much may be endured,  
 Of what degrades and crushes us. We know  
 That we have power over ourselves to do 185  
 And suffer—what, we know not till we try;  
 But something nobler than to live and die—  
 So taught those kings of old philosophy  
 Who reigned, before Religion made men blind;  
 And those who suffer with their suffering kind 190  
 Yet feel their faith, religion.' 'My dear friend,'  
 Said Maddalo, 'my judgement will not bend  
 To your opinion, though I think you might  
 Make such a system refutation-tight  
 As far as words go. I knew one like you 195  
 Who to this city came some months ago,  
 With whom I argued in this sort, and he  
 Is now gone mad,—and so he answered me,—  
 Poor fellow! but if you would like to go  
 We'll visit him, and his wild talk will show 200  
 How vain are such aspiring theories.'  
 'I hope to prove the induction otherwise,  
 And that a want of that true theory, still,  
 Which seeks a "soul of goodness" in things ill  
 Or in himself or others, has thus bowed 205  
 His being—there are some by nature proud,  
 Who patient in all else demand but this—  
 To love and be beloved with gentleness;  
 And being scorned, what wonder if they die  
 Some living death? this is not destiny 210  
 But man's own wilful ill.'

As thus I spoke



Servants announced the gondola, and we  
 Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought sea  
 Sailed to the island where the madhouse stands.  
 We disembarked. The clap of tortured hands, 215  
 Fierce yells and howlings and lamentings keen,  
 And laughter where complaint had merrier been,  
 Moans, shrieks, and curses, and blaspheming prayers  
 Accosted us. We climbed the oozy stairs  
 Into an old courtyard. I heard on high, 220  
 Then, fragments of most touching melody,  
 But looking up saw not the singer there—  
 Through the black bars in the tempestuous air  
 I saw, like weeds on a wrecked palace growing,  
 Long tangled locks flung wildly forth, and flowing, 225  
 Of those who on a sudden were beguiled  
 Into strange silence, and looked forth and smiled  
 Hearing sweet sounds.—Then I: 'Methinks there were  
 A cure of these with patience and kind care,  
 If music can thus move . . . but what is he 230  
 Whom we seek here?' 'Of his sad history  
 I know but this,' said Maddalo: 'he came  
 To Venice a dejected man, and fame  
 Said he was wealthy, or he had been so;  
 Some thought the loss of fortune wrought him woe; 235  
 But he was ever talking in such sort  
 As you do—far more sadly—he seemed hurt,  
 Even as a man with his peculiar wrong,  
 To hear but of the oppression of the strong,  
 Or those absurd deceits (I think with you 240  
 In some respects, you know) which carry through  
 The excellent impostors of this earth  
 When they outface detection—he had worth,  
 Poor fellow! but a humorist in his way'—  
 'Alas, what drove him mad?' 'I cannot say: 245  
 A lady came with him from France, and when  
 She left him and returned, he wandered then  
 About yon lonely isles of desert sand  
 Till he grew wild—he had no cash or land  
 Remaining,—the police had brought him here— 250  
 Some fancy took him and he would not bear  
 Removal; so I fitted up for him  
 Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim,  
 And sent him busts and books and urns for flowers,  
 Which had adorned his life in happier hours, 255  
 And instruments of music—you may guess  
 A stranger could do little more or less  
 For one so gentle and unfortunate:

And those are his sweet strains which charm the weight  
 From madmen's chains, and make this Hell appear 260  
 A heaven of sacred silence, hushed to hear.'—  
 'Nay, this was kind of you—he had no claim,  
 As the world says'—'None—but the very same  
 Which I on all mankind were I as he  
 Fallen to such deep reverse;—his melody 265  
 Is interrupted—now we hear the din  
 Of madmen, shriek on shriek, again begin;  
 Let us now visit him; after this strain  
 He ever communes with himself again,  
 And sees nor hears not any.' Having said 270  
 These words we called the keeper, and he led  
 To an apartment opening on the sea—  
 There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully  
 Near a piano, his pale fingers twined  
 One with the other, and the ooze and wind 275  
 Rushed through an open casement, and did sway  
 His hair, and starred it with the brackish spray;  
 His head was leaning on a music book,  
 And he was muttering, and his lean limbs shook;  
 His lips were pressed against a folded leaf 280  
 In hue too beautiful for health, and grief  
 Smiled in their motions as they lay apart—  
 As one who wrought from his own fervid heart  
 The eloquence of passion, soon he raised  
 His sad meek face and eyes lustrous and glazed 285  
 And spoke—sometimes as one who wrote, and thought  
 His words might move some heart that heeded not,  
 If sent to distant lands: and then as one  
 Reproaching deeds never to be undone  
 With wondering self-compassion; then his speech 290  
 Was lost in grief, and then his words came each  
 Unmodulated, cold, expressionless,—  
 But that from one jarred accent you might guess  
 It was despair made them so uniform:  
 And all the while the loud and gusty storm 295  
 Hissed through the window, and we stood behind  
 Stealing his accents from the envious wind  
 Unseen. I yet remember what he said  
 Distinctly: such impression his words made.

'Month after month,' he cried, 'to bear this load 300  
 And as a jade urged by the whip and goad  
 To drag life on, which like a heavy chain  
 Lengthens behind with many a link of pain!—  
 And not to speak my grief—O, not to dare

To give a human voice to my despair, 305  
 But live and move, and, wretched thing! smile on  
 As if I never went aside to groan,  
 And wear this mask of falsehood even to those  
 Who are most dear—not for my own repose—  
 Alas! no scorn or pain or hate could be 310  
 So heavy as that falsehood is to me—  
 But that I cannot bear more altered faces  
 Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,  
 More misery, disappointment, and mistrust  
 To own me for their father . . . Would the dust 315  
 Were covered in upon my body now!  
 That the life ceased to toil within my brow!  
 And then these thoughts would at the least be fled;  
 Let us not fear such pain can vex the dead.

‘What Power delights to torture us? I know 320  
 That to myself I do not wholly owe  
 What now I suffer, though in part I may.  
 Alas! none strewed sweet flowers upon the way  
 Where wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain  
 My shadow, which will leave me not again— 325  
 If I have erred, there was no joy in error,  
 But pain and insult and unrest and terror;  
 I have not as some do, bought penitence  
 With pleasure, and a dark yet sweet offence,  
 For them,—if love and tenderness and truth 330  
 Had overlived hope’s momentary youth,  
 My creed should have redeemed me from repenting;  
 But loathed scorn and outrage unrelenting  
 Met love excited by far other seeming  
 Until the end was gained . . . as one from dreaming 335  
 Of sweetest peace, I woke, and found my state  
 Such as it is.—

‘O Thou, my spirit’s mate  
 Who, for thou art compassionate and wise,  
 Wouldst pity me from thy most gentle eyes  
 If this sad writing thou shouldst ever see— 340  
 My secret groans must be unheard by thee,  
 Thou wouldst weep tears bitter as blood to know  
 Thy lost friend’s incommunicable woe.

‘Ye few by whom my nature has been weighed  
 In friendship, let me not that name degrade 345  
 By placing on your hearts the secret load  
 Which crushes mine to dust. There is one road  
 To peace and that is truth, which follow ye!  
 Love sometimes leads astray to misery.



Pale art thou, 'tis most true . . . but thou art gone,  
Thy work is finished . . . I am left alone!—

. . . . .

'Nay, was it I who wooed thee to this breast  
Which, like a serpent, thou envenomest  
As in repayment of the warmth it lent? 400  
Didst thou not seek me for thine own content?  
Did not thy love awaken mine? I thought  
That thou wert she who said, "You kiss me not  
Ever, I fear you do not love me now"—  
In truth I loved even to my overthrow 405  
Her, who would fain forget these words: but they  
Cling to her mind, and cannot pass away.

. . . . .

'You say that I am proud—that when I speak  
My lip is tortured with the wrongs which break  
The spirit it expresses . . . Never one 410  
Humbled himself before, as I have done!  
Even the instinctive worm on which we tread  
Turns, though it wound not—then with prostrate head  
Sinks in the dusk and writhes like me—and dies?  
No: wears a living death of agonies! 415  
As the slow shadows of the pointed grass  
Mark the eternal periods, his pangs pass  
Slow, ever-moving,—making moments be  
As mine seem—each an immortality!

. . . . .

'That you had never seen me—never heard 420  
My voice, and more than all had ne'er endured  
The deep pollution of my loathed embrace—  
That your eyes ne'er had lied love in my face—  
That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out  
The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root 425  
With mine own quivering fingers, so that ne'er  
Our hearts had for a moment mingled there  
To disunite in horror—these were not  
With thee, like some suppressed and hideous thought  
Which flits athwart our musings, but can find 430  
No rest within a pure and gentle mind . . .  
Thou sealedst them with many a bare broad word,  
And searedst my memory o'er them,—for I heard  
And can forget not . . . they were ministered  
One after one, those curses. Mix them up 435  
Like self-destroying poisons in one cup.

And they will make one blessing which thou ne'er  
Didst imprecate for, on me,—death.

. . . . .

‘It were

A cruel punishment for one most cruel,  
If such can love, to make that love the fuel 440  
Of the mind’s hell; hate, scorn, remorse, despair:  
But *me*—whose heart a stranger’s tear might wear  
As water-drops the sandy fountain-stone,  
Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan  
For woes which others hear not, and could see 445  
The absent with the glance of phantasy,  
And with the poor and trampled sit and weep,  
Following the captive to his dungeon deep;  
*Me*—who am as a nerve o’er which do creep  
The else unfelt oppressions of this earth, 450  
And was to thee the flame upon thy hearth,  
When all beside was cold—that thou on me  
Shouldst rain these plagues of blistering agony—  
Such curses are from lips once eloquent  
With love’s too partial praise—let none relent 455  
Who intend deeds too dreadful for a name  
Henceforth, if an example for the same  
They seek . . . for thou on me lookedst so, and so—  
And didst speak thus . . . and thus . . . I live to show  
How much men bear and die not! 460

. . . . .

‘Thou wilt tell,

With the grimace of hate, how horrible  
It was to meet my love when thine grew less;  
Thou wilt admire how I could e’er address  
Such features to love’s work . . . this taunt, though true, 465  
(For indeed Nature nor in form nor hue  
Bestowed on me her choicest workmanship)  
Shall not be thy defence . . . for since thy lip  
Met mine first, years long past, since thine eye kindled  
With soft fire under mine, I have not dwindled  
Nor changed in mind or body, or in aught 470  
But as love changes what it loveth not  
After long years and many trials.

‘How vain

Are words! I thought never to speak again,  
Not even in secret,—not to my own heart—  
But from my lips the unwilling accents start, 475  
And from my pen the words flow as I write,  
Dazzling my eyes with scalding tears . . . my sight

Is dim to see that charactered in vain  
 On this unfeeling leaf which burns the brain  
 And eats into it . . . blotting all things fair 480  
 And wise and good which time had written there.

‘Those who inflict must suffer, for they see  
 The work of their own hearts, and this must be  
 Our chastisement or recompense—O child!  
 I would that thine were like to be more mild 485  
 For both our wretched sakes . . . for thine the most  
 Who feelest already all that thou hast lost  
 Without the power to wish it thine again;  
 And as slow years pass, a funereal train  
 Each with the ghost of some lost hope or friend 490  
 Following it like its shadow, wilt thou bend  
 No thought on my dead memory?  
 . . . . .

‘Alas, love!

Fear me not . . . against thee I would not move  
 A finger in despite. Do I not live  
 That thou mayst have less bitter cause to grieve? 495  
 I give thee tears for scorn and love for hate;  
 And that thy lot may be less desolate  
 Than his on whom thou tramplest, I refrain  
 From that sweet sleep which medicines all pain.  
 Then, when thou speakest of me, never say 500  
 “He could forgive not.” Here I cast away  
 All human passions, all revenge, all pride;  
 I think, speak, act no ill; I do but hide  
 Under these words, like embers, every spark  
 Of that which has consumed me—quick and dark 505  
 The grave is yawning . . . as its roof shall cover  
 My limbs with dust and worms under and over  
 So let Oblivion hide this grief . . . the air  
 Closes upon my accents, as despair  
 Upon my heart—let death upon despair!’ 510

He ceased, and overcome leant back awhile,  
 Then rising, with a melancholy smile  
 Went to a sofa, and lay down, and slept  
 A heavy sleep, and in his dreams he wept  
 And muttered some familiar name, and we 515  
 Wept without shame in his society.  
 I think I never was impressed so much;  
 The man who were not, must have lacked a touch  
 Of human nature . . . then we lingered not,  
 Although our argument was quite forgot, 520

But calling the attendants, went to dine  
 At Maddalo's; yet neither cheer nor wine  
 Could give us spirits, for we talked of him  
 And nothing else, till daylight made stars dim;  
 And we agreed his was some dreadful ill 525  
 Wrought on him boldly, yet unspeakable,  
 By a dear friend; some deadly change in love  
 Of one vowed deeply which he dreamed not of;  
 For whose sake he, it seemed, had fixed a blot  
 Of falsehood on his mind which flourished not 530  
 But in the light of all-beholding truth;  
 And having stamped this canker on his youth  
 She had abandoned him—and how much more  
 Might be his woe, we guessed not—he had store  
 Of friends and fortune once, as we could guess 535  
 From his nice habits and his gentleness;  
 These were now lost . . . it were a grief indeed  
 If he had changed one unsustaining reed  
 For all that such a man might else adorn.  
 The colours of his mind seemed yet unworn; 540  
 For the wild language of his grief was high,  
 Such as in measure were called poetry;  
 And I remember one remark which then  
 Maddalo made. He said: 'Most wretched men  
 Are cradled into poetry by wrong, 545  
 They learn in suffering what they teach in song.'

If I had been an unconnected man  
 I, from this moment, should have formed some plan  
 Never to leave sweet Venice,—for to me  
 It was delight to ride by the lone sea; 550  
 And then, the town is silent—one may write  
 Or read in gondolas by day or night,  
 Having the little brazen lamp alight,  
 Unseen, uninterrupted; books are there,  
 Pictures, and casts from all those statues fair 555  
 Which were twin-born with poetry, and all  
 We seek in towns, with little to recall  
 Regrets for the green country. I might sit  
 In Maddalo's great palace, and his wit  
 And subtle talk would cheer the winter night 560  
 And make me know myself, and the firelight  
 Would flash upon our faces, till the day  
 Might dawn and make me wonder at my stay:  
 But I had friends in London too: the chief  
 Attraction here, was that I sought relief 565



From the deep tenderness that maniac wrought  
 Within me—'twas perhaps an idle thought—  
 But I imagined that if day by day  
 I watched him, and but seldom went away,  
 And studied all the beatings of his heart 570  
 With zeal, as men study some stubborn art  
 For their own good, and could by patience find  
 An entrance to the caverns of his mind,  
 I might reclaim him from his dark estate:  
 In friendships I had been most fortunate— 575  
 Yet never saw I one whom I would call  
 More willingly my friend; and this was all  
 Accomplished not; such dreams of baseless good  
 Oft come and go in crowds or solitude  
 And leave no trace—but what I now designed 580  
 Made for long years impression on my mind.  
 The following morning, urged by my affairs,  
 I left bright Venice.

After many years  
 And many changes I returned; the name  
 Of Venice, and its aspect, was the same; 585  
 But Maddalo was travelling far away  
 Among the mountains of Armenia.  
 His dog was dead. His child had now become  
 A woman; such as it has been my doom  
 To meet with few,—a wonder of this earth, 590  
 Where there is little of transcendent worth,—  
 Like one of Shakespeare's women: kindly she,  
 And, with a manner beyond courtesy,  
 Received her father's friend; and when I asked  
 Of the lorn maniac, she her memory tasked, 595  
 And told as she had heard the mournful tale:  
 'That the poor sufferer's health began to fail  
 Two years from my departure, but that then  
 The lady who had left him, came again.  
 Her mien had been imperious, but she now 600  
 Looked meek—perhaps remorse had brought her low.  
 Her coming made him better, and they stayed  
 Together at my father's—for I played,  
 As I remember, with the lady's shawl—  
 I might be six years old—but after all 605  
 She left him' . . . 'Why, her heart must have been tough:  
 How did it end?' 'And was not this enough?  
 They met—they parted'—'Child, is there no more?'  
 'Something within that interval which bore  
 The stamp of *why* they parted, *how* they met: 610  
 Yet if thine agèd eyes disdain to wet

Those wrinkled cheeks with youth's remembered tears,  
 Ask me no more, but let the silent years  
 Be closed and cered over their memory  
 As yon mute márble where their corpses lie.' 615  
 I urged and questioned still, she told me how  
 All happened—but the cold world shall not know.

### CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF JULIAN AND MADDALO

'What think you the dead are?' 'Why, dust and clay,  
 What should they be?' ' 'Tis the last hour of day.  
 Look on the west, how beautiful it is 620  
 Vaulted with radiant vapours! The deep bliss  
 Of that unutterable light has made  
 The edges of that cloud fade  
 Into a hue, like some harmonious thought,  
 Wasting itself on that which it had wrought, 625  
 Till it dies and between  
 The light hues of the tender, pure, serene,  
 And infinite tranquillity of heaven.  
 Ay, beautiful! but when not. . . '

. . . . .  
 'Perhaps the only comfort which remains 630  
 Is the unheeded clanking of my chains,  
 The which I make, and call it melody.'

### NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY

FROM the Baths of Lucca, in 1818, Shelley visited Venice; and, circumstances rendering it eligible that we should remain a few weeks in the neighbourhood of that city, he accepted the offer of Lord Byron, who lent him the use of a villa he rented near Este; and he sent for his family from Lucca to join him.

I Capuccini was a villa built on the site of a Capuchin convent, demolished when the French suppressed religious houses; it was situated on the very overhanging brow of a low hill at the foot of a range of higher ones. The house was cheerful and pleasant; a vine-trellised walk, a *pergola*, as it is called in Italian, led from the hall-door to a summer-house at the end of the garden, which Shelley made his study, and in which he began the *Prometheus*; and here also, as he mentions in a letter, he wrote *Julian and Maddalo*. A slight ravine, with a road in its depth, divided the garden from the hill, on which stood the ruins of the ancient castle of Este, whose dark massive wall gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevices owls and bats flitted forth at night, as the crescent moon sunk behind the black and heavy battlements. We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the far Apennines, while to the east the horizon was lost in misty distance. After the picturesque but

limited view of mountain, ravine, and chestnut-wood, at the Baths of Lucca, there was something infinitely gratifying to the eye in the wide range of prospect commanded by our new abode.

Our first misfortune, of the kind from which we soon suffered even more severely, happened here. Our little girl, an infant in whose small features I fancied that I traced great resemblance to her father, showed symptoms of suffering from the heat of the climate. Teething increased her illness and danger. We were at Este, and when we became alarmed, hastened to Venice for the best advice. When we arrived at Fusina, we found that we had forgotten our passport, and the soldiers on duty attempted to prevent our crossing the laguna; but they could not resist Shelley's impetuosity at such a moment. We had scarcely arrived at Venice before life fled from the little sufferer, and we returned to Este to weep her loss.

After a few weeks spent in this retreat, which was interspersed by visits to Venice, we proceeded southward.

## PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

### A LYRICAL DRAMA

#### IN FOUR ACTS

AUDISNE HAEC AMPHIARAE, SUB TERRAM ABDITE?

#### PREFACE

THE Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The *Prometheus Unbound* of Æschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Æschylus; an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we

could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind. Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works (since a higher merit would probably be denied me) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England, has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakespeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural, and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, 'a passion for reforming the world:' what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take Æschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

|             |          |                   |                          |
|-------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| PROMETHEUS. | APOLLO.  |                   | HERCULES.                |
| DEMOGORGON. | MERCURY. |                   | THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER. |
| JUPITER.    | ASIA     | } Ocean-<br>ides. | THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH. |
| THE EARTH.  | PANTHEA  |                   | THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON.  |
| OCEAN.      | IONE     |                   | SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.    |

SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAUNS. FURIES.

### ACT I

SCENE.—*A Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus. PROMETHEUS is discovered bound to the Precipice. PANTHEA and IONE are seated at his feet. Time, night. During the Scene, morning slowly breaks.*

*Prometheus.* Monarch of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits  
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds  
Which Thou and I alone of living things

Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth  
 Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou 5  
 Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,  
 And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,  
 With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.  
 Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,  
 Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn, 10  
 O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.  
 Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,  
 And moments aye divided by keen pangs  
 Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,  
 Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire:— 15  
 More glorious far than that which thou surveyest  
 From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God!  
 Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame  
 Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here  
 Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain, 20  
 Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,  
 Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.  
 Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.  
 I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt? 25  
 I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,  
 Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,  
 Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,  
 Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?  
 Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever! 30

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears  
 Of their moon-freezing crystals, the bright chains  
 Eat with their burning cold into my bones.  
 Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from thy lips  
 His beak in poison not his own, tears up 35  
 My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,  
 The ghastly people of the realm of dream,  
 Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged  
 To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds  
 When the rocks split and close again behind: 40  
 While from their loud abysses howling throng  
 The genii of the storm, urging the rage  
 Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.  
 And yet to me welcome is day and night,  
 Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn, 45  
 Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs  
 The leaden-coloured east; for then they lead  
 The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom  
 —As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—

Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood 50  
 From these pale feet, which then might trample thee  
 If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.  
 Disdain! Ah no! I pity thee. What ruin  
 Will hunt thee undefended through wide Heaven!  
 How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror, 55  
 Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,  
 Not exultation, for I hate no more,  
 As then ere misery made me wise. The curse  
 Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,  
 Whose many-voicèd Echoes, through the mist 60  
 Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!  
 Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,  
 Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept  
 Shuddering through India! Thou serenest Air,  
 Through which the Sun walks burning without beams!  
 And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poisèd wings 66  
 Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,  
 As thunder, louder than your own, made rock  
 The orbèd world! If then my words had power,  
 Though I am changed so that aught evil wish 70  
 Is dead within; although no memory be  
 Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!  
 What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

*First Voice (from the Mountains).*

Thrice three hundred thousand years  
 O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood: 75  
 Oft, as men convulsed with fears,  
 We trembled in our multitude.

*Second Voice (from the Springs).*

Thunderbolts had parched our water,  
 We had been stained with bitter blood,  
 And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter, 80  
 Thro' a city and a solitude.

*Third Voice (from the Air).*

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,  
 Its wastes in colours not their own,  
 And oft had my serene repose  
 Been cloven by many a rending groan. 85

*Fourth Voice (from the Whirlwinds).*

We had soared beneath these mountains  
 Unresting ages; nor had thunder,  
 Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,  
 Nor any power above or under  
 Ever made us mute with wonder. 90



*First Voice.*

But never bowed our snowy crest  
As at the voice of thine unrest.

*Second Voice.*

Never such a sound before  
To the Indian waves we bore.  
A pilot asleep on the howling sea 95  
Leaped up from the deck in agony,  
And heard, and cried, 'Ah, woe is me!'  
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

*Third Voice.*

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven  
My still realm was never riven: 100  
When its wound was closed, there stood  
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

*Fourth Voice.*

And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin  
To frozen caves our flight pursuing  
Made us keep silence—thus—and thus— 105  
Though silence is as hell to us.

*The Earth.* The tongueless Caverns of the craggy hills  
Cried, 'Misery!' then; the hollow Heaven replied,  
'Misery!' And the Ocean's purple waves,  
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds, 110  
And the pale nations heard it, 'Misery!'

*Prometheus.* I heard a sound of voices: not the voice  
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou  
Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will  
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove, 115  
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist  
Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,  
The Titan? He who made his agony  
The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?  
Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams, 120  
Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,  
Through whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered once  
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;  
Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now  
To commune with me? me alone, who checked, 125  
As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,  
The falsehood and the force of him who reigns  
Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves  
Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:

Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!  
*The Earth.* They dare not. 130  
*Prometheus.* Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.  
 Ha, what an awful whisper rises up!  
 'Tis scarce like sound: it tingles through the frame  
 As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.  
 Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice 135  
 I only know that thou art moving near  
 And love. How cursed I him?  
*The Earth.* How canst thou hear  
 Who knowest not the language of the dead?  
*Prometheus.* Thou art a living spirit, speak as they.  
*The Earth.* I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell King  
 Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain 141  
 More torturing than the one whereon I roll.  
 Subtle thou art and good, and though the Gods  
 Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God,  
 Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken now. 145  
*Prometheus.* Obscurely through my brain, like shadows dim,  
 Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel  
 Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;  
 Yet 'tis not pleasure.  
*The Earth.* No, thou canst not hear:  
 Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known 150  
 Only to those who die.  
*Prometheus.* And what art thou,  
 O, melancholy Voice?  
*The Earth.* I am the Earth,  
 Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,  
 To the last fibre of the loftiest tree  
 Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air, 155  
 Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,  
 When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud  
 Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!  
 And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted  
 Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust, 160  
 And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread  
 Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.  
 Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll  
 Around us: their inhabitants beheld  
 My spherèd light wane in wide Heaven; the sea 165  
 Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire  
 From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow  
 Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown;  
 Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;  
 Blue thistles bloomed in cities; foodless toads 170  
 Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled:

When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm,  
 And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree;  
 And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,  
 Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds 175  
 Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry  
 With grief; and the thin air, my breath, was stained  
 With the contagion of a mother's hate  
 Breathed on her child's destroyer; ay, I heard  
 Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not, 180  
 Yet my innumerable seas and streams,  
 Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,  
 And the inarticulate people of the dead,  
 Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate  
 In secret joy and hope those dreadful words, 185  
 But dare not speak them.

*Prometheus.* Venerable mother!

All else who live and suffer take from thee  
 Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,  
 And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine.  
 But mine own words, I pray, deny me not. 190

*The Earth.* They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,  
 The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,  
 Met his own image walking in the garden.  
 That apparition, sole of men, he saw.  
 For know there are two worlds of life and death: 195  
 One that which thou beholdest; but the other  
 Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit  
 The shadows of all forms that think and live  
 Till death unite them and they part no more;  
 Dreams and the light imaginings of men, 200  
 And all that faith creates or love desires,  
 Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.  
 There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,  
 'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods  
 Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds, 205  
 Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts;  
 And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;  
 And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne  
 Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter  
 The curse which all remember. Call at will 210  
 Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,  
 Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods  
 From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin  
 Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.  
 Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge 215  
 Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades,  
 As rainy wind through the abandoned gate

Of a fallen palace.

*Prometheus.* Mother, let not aught  
Of that which may be evil, pass again  
My lips, or those of aught resembling me. 220  
Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear!

*Ione.*

My wings are folded o'er mine ears:  
My wings are crossèd o'er mine eyes:  
Yet through their silver shade appears,  
And through their lulling plumes arise, 225  
A Shape, a throng of sounds;  
May it be no ill to thee  
O thou of many wounds!  
Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,  
Ever thus we watch and wake. 230

*Panthea.*

The sound is of whirlwind underground.  
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;  
The shape is awful like the sound,  
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.  
A sceptre of pale gold 235  
To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud  
His veined hand doth hold.  
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,  
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

*Phantasm of Jupiter.* Why have the secret powers  
of this strange world 240  
Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither  
On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds  
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice  
With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk  
In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou? 245

*Prometheus.* Tremendous Image, as thou art must be  
He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,  
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,  
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

*The Earth.* Listen! And though your echoes must be mute,  
Gray mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs, 251  
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,  
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak,

*Phantasm.* A spirit seizes me and speaks within:  
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud. 255

*Panthea.* See, how he lifts his mighty looks, the Heaven  
Darkens above.

*Ione.* He speaks! O shelter me!

*Prometheus.* I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,  
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,  
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles, 260  
Written as on a scroll: yet speak: Oh, speak!

*Phantasm.*

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,  
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;  
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,  
One only being shalt thou not subdue. 265  
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,  
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;  
And let alternate frost and fire  
Eat into me, and be thine ire  
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms 270  
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Ay, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.  
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,  
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent  
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower. 275  
Let thy malignant spirit move  
In darkness over those I love:  
On me and mine I imprecate  
The utmost torture of thy hate;  
And thus devote to sleepless agony, 280  
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O, thou,  
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,  
To whom all things of Earth and heaven do bow  
In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe! 285  
I curse thee! let a sufferer's curse  
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;  
Till thine Infinity shall be  
A robe of envenomed agony;  
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain, 290  
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,  
Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good;  
Both infinite as is the universe,  
And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude. 295  
An awful image of calm power  
Though now thou sittest, let the hour  
Come, when thou must appear to be  
That which thou art internally;

And after many a false and fruitless crime 300  
 Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space  
 and time.

*Prometheus.* Were these my words, O Parent?

*The Earth.* They were thine.

*Prometheus.* It doth repent me: words are quick and vain;  
 Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.  
 I wish no living thing to suffer pain. 305

*The Earth.*

Misery, Oh misery to me,  
 That Jove at length should vanquish thee.  
 Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,  
 The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.  
 Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead, 310  
 Your refuge, your defence lies fallen and vanquishèd.

*First Echo.*

Lies fallen and vanquishèd!

*Second Echo.*

Fallen and vanquishèd!

*Ione.*

Fear not: 'tis but some passing spasm,  
 The Titan is unvanquished still. 315

But see, where through the azure chasm

Of yon forked and snowy hill

Trampling the slant winds on high

With golden-sandalled feet, that glow 320  
 Under plumes of purple dye,

Like rose-ensanguined ivory,

A Shape comes now,

Stretching on high from his right hand

A serpent-cinctured wand.

*Panthea.* 'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury. 325

*Ione.*

And who are those with hydra tresses

And iron wings that climb the wind,

Whom the frowning God represses

Like vapours steaming up behind,

Clanging loud, an endless crowd— 330

*Panthea.*

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,  
 Whom he gluts with groans and blood,

When charioted on sulphurous cloud  
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

*Ione.*

Are they now led, from the thin dead 335  
On new pangs to be fed?

*Panthea.*

The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

*First Fury.* Ha! I scent life!

*Second Fury.* Let me but look into his eyes!

*Third Fury.* The hope of torturing him smells like a heap  
Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle. 340

*First Fury.* Darest thou delay, O Herald! take cheer, Hounds  
Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon  
Should make us food and sport—who can please long  
The Omnipotent?

*Mercury.* Back to your towers of iron,  
And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail, 345  
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,  
Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends  
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,  
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:  
These shall perform your task.

*First Fury.* Oh, mercy! mercy! 350  
We die with our desire: drive us not back!

*Mercury.* Crouch then in silence.

Awful Sufferer!

To thee unwilling, most unwillingly  
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,  
To execute a doom of new revenge. 355

Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself  
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight  
Returning, for a season, Heaven seems Hell,  
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,  
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good, 360

But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife  
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps  
That measure and divide the weary years  
From which there is no refuge, long have taught  
And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms 365

With the strange might of unimagined pains  
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,  
And my commission is to lead them here,  
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends  
People the abyss, and leave them to their task. 370  
Be it not so! there is a secret known

To thee, and to none else of living things,  
 Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,  
 The fear of which perplexes the Supreme:  
 Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne 375  
 In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,  
 And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,  
 Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart:  
 For benefits and meek submission tame  
 The fiercest and the mightiest.

*Prometheus.* Evil minds 380  
 Change good to their own nature. I gave all  
 He has; and in return he chains me here  
 Years, ages, night and day: whether the Sun  
 Split my parched skin, or in the moony night  
 The crystal-wingèd snow cling round my hair: 385  
 Whilst my belovèd race is trampled down  
 By his thought-executing ministers.  
 Such is the tyrant's recompense: 'tis just:  
 He who is evil can receive no good;  
 And for a world bestowèd, or a friend lost, 390  
 He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude:  
 He but requites me for his own misdeed.  
 Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks  
 With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.  
 Submission, thou dost know I cannot try: 395  
 For what submission but that fatal word,  
 The death-seal of mankind's captivity,  
 Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,  
 Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,  
 Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield. 400  
 Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned  
 In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:  
 For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down  
 Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,  
 Too much avenged by those who err. I wait, 405  
 Enduring thus, the retributive hour  
 Which since we spake is even nearer now.  
 But hark, the hell-hounds clamour: fear delay:  
 Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

*Mercury.* Oh, that we might be spared: I to inflict 410  
 And thou to suffer! Once more answer me:

Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?

*Prometheus.* I know but this, that it must come.

*Mercury.* Alas!

Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain?

*Prometheus.* They last while Jove must reign: nor 415  
 more, nor less



Do I desire or fear.

*Mercury.* Yet pause, and plunge  
Into Eternity, where recorded time,  
Even all that we imagine, age on age,  
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind  
Flags wearily in its unending flight,  
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless;  
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years  
Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved?

420

*Prometheus.* Perchance no thought can count them, yet  
they pass.

*Mercury.* If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the while  
Lapped in voluptuous joy?

*Prometheus.* I would not quit  
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

426

*Mercury.* Alas! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

*Prometheus.* Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,  
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,  
As light in the sun, throned: how vain is talk!  
Call up the fiends.

430

*Ione.* O, sister, look! White fire  
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar;  
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind!

*Mercury.* I must obey his words and thine; alas!  
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!

435

*Panthea.* See where the child of Heaven, with wingèd feet,  
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

*Ione.* Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes  
Lest thou behold and die: they come: they come  
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,  
And hollow underneath, like death.

440

*First Fury.* Prometheus!

*Second Fury.* Immortal Titan!

*Third Fury.* Champion of Heaven's slaves!

*Prometheus.* He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,  
Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,  
What and who are ye? Never yet there came  
Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell  
From the all-miscreative brain of Jove;  
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,  
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,  
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

450

*First Fury.* We are the ministers of pain, and fear,  
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,  
And clinging crime; and as lean dogs pursue  
Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,  
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,

455

When the great King betrays them to our will.

*Prometheus.* Oh! many fearful natures in one name,  
I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know  
The darkness and the clangour of your wings. 460  
But why more hideous than your loathèd selves  
Gather ye up in legions from the deep?

*Second Fury.* We knew not that: Sisters, rejoice, rejoice!

*Prometheus.* Can aught exult in its deformity?

*Second Fury.* The beauty of delight makes lovers glad, 465  
Gazing on one another: so are we.

As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels  
To gather for her festal crown of flowers  
The æreal crimson falls, flushing her cheek,  
So from our victim's destined agony 470  
The shade which is our form invests us round,  
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

*Prometheus.* I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,  
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

*First Fury.* Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone,  
And nerve from nerve, working like fire within? 476

*Prometheus.* Pain is my element, as hate is thine;  
Ye rend me now: I care not.

*Second Fury.* Dost imagine  
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?

*Prometheus.* I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer, 480  
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called  
You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

*Third Fury.* Thou think'st we will live through thee, one  
by one,

Like animal life, and though we can obscure not  
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell 485  
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude

Vexing the self-content of wisest men:  
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,  
And foul desire round thine astonished heart,  
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins 490  
Crawling like agony?

*Prometheus.* Why, we are thus now;  
Yet am I king over myself, and rule  
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,  
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous. 494

#### *Chorus of Furies.*

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,  
Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth,  
Come, come, come!  
Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,

When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye  
 Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,  
 And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,  
 Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck;

Come, come, come!

Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,  
 Strewed beneath a nation dead;

Leave the hatred, as in ashes

Fire is left for future burning:

It will burst in bloodier flashes

When ye stir it, soon returning:

Leave the self-contempt implanted

In young spirits, sense-enchanted,

Misery's yet unkindled fuel:

Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted

To the maniac dreamer; cruel

More than ye can be with hate

Is he with fear.

Come, come, come!

We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate

And we burthen the blast of the atmosphere,

But vainly we toil till ye come here.

*Ione.* Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

*Panthea.* These solid mountains quiver with the sound  
 Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make  
 The space within my plumes more black than night.

*First Fury.*

Your call was as a wingèd car

Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;

It rapped us from red gulfs of war.

*Second Fury.*

From wide cities, famine-wasted;

*Third Fury.*

Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

*Fourth Fury.*

Kingly conclaves stern and cold,

Where blood with gold is bought and sold;

*Fifth Fury.*

From the furnace, white and hot,

In which—

*A Fury.*

Speak not: whisper not:  
 I know all that ye would tell,  
 But to speak might break the spell 535  
 Which must bend the Invincible,  
 The stern of thought;  
 He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

*A Fury.*

Tear the veil!

*Another Fury.*

It is torn.

*Chorus.*

The pale stars of the morn  
 Shine on a misery, dire to be borne. 540  
 Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.  
 Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for man?  
 Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran  
 Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,  
 Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever. 545  
 One came forth of gentle worth  
 Smiling on the sanguine earth;  
 His words outlived him, like swift poison  
 Withering up truth, peace, and pity.  
 Look! where round the wide horizon 550  
 Many a million-peopled city  
 Vomits smoke in the bright air.  
 Hark that outcry of despair!  
 'Tis his mild and gentle ghost  
 Wailing for the faith he kindled: 555  
 Look again, the flames almost  
 To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:  
 The survivors round the embers  
 Gather in dread.  
 Joy, joy, joy! 560  
 Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,  
 And the future is dark, and the present is spread  
 Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

*Semichorus I.*

Drops of bloody agony flow  
 From his white and quivering brow. 565  
 Grant a little respite now:  
 See a disenchanted nation

Springs like day from desolation;  
 To Truth its state is dedicate,  
 And Freedom leads it forth, her mate; 570  
 A legioned band of linkèd brothers  
 Whom Love calls children—

*Semichorus II.*

'Tis another's:

See how kindred murder kin:  
 'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin:  
 Blood, like new wine, bubbles within: 575  
 Till Despair smothers

The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.

[*All the FURIES vanish, except one*

*Ione.* Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan  
 Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart  
 Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep, 580  
 And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.  
 Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?

*Panthea.* Alas! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

*Ione.* What didst thou see?

*Panthea.* A woful sight: a youth  
 With patient looks nailed to a crucifix. 585

*Ione.* What next?

*Panthea.* The heaven around, the earth below  
 Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,  
 All horrible, and wrought by human hands,  
 And some appeared the work of human hearts.  
 For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles: 590  
 And other sights too foul to speak and live  
 Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear  
 By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.

*Fury.* Behold an emblem: those who do endure  
 Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap 595  
 Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.

*Prometheus.* Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;  
 Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow  
 Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears!  
 Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death, 600  
 So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,  
 So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.  
 O, horrible! Thy name I will not speak,  
 It hath become a curse. I see, I see  
 The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just, 605  
 Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,  
 Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,  
 An early-chosen, late-lamented home;

As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind;  
 Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells: 610  
 Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh loud?—  
 Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms  
 Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,  
 Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood  
 By the red light of their own burning homes. 615

*Fury.* Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans;  
 Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

*Prometheus.* Worse?

*Fury.* In each human heart terror survives  
 The ravin it has gorged: the loftiest fear  
 All that they would disdain to think were true: 620  
 Hypocrisy and custom make their minds  
 The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.  
 They dare not devise good for man's estate,  
 And yet they know not that they do not dare.  
 The good want power, but to weep barren tears. 625  
 The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.  
 The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;  
 And all best things are thus confused to ill.  
 Many are strong and rich, and would be just,  
 But live among their suffering fellow-men 630  
 As if none felt: they know not what they do.

*Prometheus.* Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd snakes;  
 And yet I pity those they torture not.

*Fury.* Thou pitiest them? I speak no more! [Vanishes.

*Prometheus.* Ah woe! 635  
 Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!  
 I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear  
 Thy works within my woe-illumèd mind,  
 Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.  
 The grave hides all things beautiful and good:  
 I am a God and cannot find it there, 640  
 Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,  
 This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.  
 The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul  
 With new endurance, till the hour arrives  
 When they shall be no types of things which are. 645

*Panthea.* Alas! what sawest thou more?

*Prometheus.* There are two woes:  
 To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.  
 Names are there, Nature's sacred watchwords, they  
 Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;  
 The nations thronged around, and cried aloud, 650  
 As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!  
 Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven

Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:  
 Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.  
 This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

655

*The Earth.* I felt thy torture, son; with such mixed joy  
 As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state  
 I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,  
 Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,  
 And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,  
 Its world-surrounding aether: they behold  
 Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,  
 The future: may they speak comfort to thee!

660

*Panthea.* Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,  
 Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,  
 Thronging in the blue air!

665

*Ione.* And see! more come,  
 Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,  
 That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.  
 And, hark! is it the music of the pines?  
 Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?

670

*Panthea.* 'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

### *Chorus of Spirits.*

From unremembered ages we  
 Gentle guides and guardians be  
 Of heaven-oppressed mortality;  
 And we breathe, and sicken not,  
 The atmosphere of human thought:  
 Be it dim, and dank, and gray,  
 Like a storm-extinguished day,  
 Travelled o'er by dying gleams;

675

Be it bright as all between  
 Cloudless skies and windless streams,  
 Silent, liquid, and serene;  
 As the birds within the wind,  
 As the fish within the wave,  
 As the thoughts of man's own mind  
 Float through all above the grave;

680

We make there our liquid lair,  
 Voyaging cloudlike and unpent  
 Through the boundless element:  
 Thence we bear the prophecy  
 Which begins and ends in thee!

685

690

*Ione.* More yet come, one by one: the air around them  
 Looks radiant as the air around a star.

*First Spirit.*

On a battle-trumpet's blast  
 I fled hither, fast, fast, fast, 695  
 'Mid the darkness upward cast.  
 From the dust of creeds outworn,  
 From the tyrant's banner torn,  
 Gathering 'round me, onward borne,  
 There was mingled many a cry— 700  
 Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!  
 Till they faded through the sky;  
 And one sound, above, around,  
 One sound beneath, around, above,  
 Was moving; 'twas the soul of Love; 705  
 'Twas the hope, the prophecy,  
 Which begins and ends in thee.

*Second Spirit.*

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,  
 Which rocked beneath, immovably;  
 And the triumphant storm did flee, 710  
 Like a conqueror, swift and proud,  
 Between, with many a captive cloud,  
 A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,  
 Each by lightning riven in half:  
 I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh: 715  
 Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff  
 And spread beneath a hell of death  
 O'er the white waters. I alit  
 On a great ship lightning-split,  
 And speeded hither on the sigh 720  
 Of one who gave an enemy  
 His plank, then plunged aside to die.

*Third Spirit.*

I sate beside a sage's bed,  
 And the lamp was burning red  
 Near the book where he had fed, 725  
 When a Dream with plumes of flame,  
 To his pillow hovering came,  
 And I knew it was the same  
 Which had kindled long ago  
 Pity, eloquence, and woe; 730  
 And the world awhile below  
 Wore the shade, its lustre made.  
 It has borne me here as fleet  
 As Desire's lightning feet:



I must ride it back ere morrow,  
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

735

*Fourth Spirit.*

On a poet's lips I slept  
Dreaming like a love-adept  
In the sound his breathing kept;  
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,  
But feeds on the ærcal kisses  
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.  
He will watch from dawn to gloom  
The lake-reflected sun illumine  
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,  
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;  
But from these create he can  
Forms more real than living man,  
Nurslings of immortality!  
One of these awakened me,  
And I sped to succour thee.

740

745

750

*Ione.*

Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west  
Come, as two doves to one belovèd nest,  
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air  
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?  
And, hark! their sweet, sad voices! 'tis despair  
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

755

*Panthea.* Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned.

*Ione.* Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float  
On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,  
Orange and azure deepening into gold:  
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

760

*Chorus of Spirits.*

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

*Fifth Spirit.*

As over wide dominions  
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wildernesses,  
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided pinions,  
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses:  
His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I passed 'twas fading,  
And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages bound in madness.

767

And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished, unup-  
braiding,  
Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou, O King of  
sadness, 770  
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected gladness.

*Sixth Spirit.*

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:  
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,  
But treads with lulling footstep, and fans with silent wing  
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest  
bear; 775  
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above  
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,  
Dream visions of æreal joy, and call the monster, Love,  
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now we  
greet.

*Chorus.*

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be, 780  
Following him, destroyingly,  
On Death's white and wingèd steed,  
Which the fleetest cannot flee.  
Trampling down both flower and weed,  
Man and beast, and foul and fair, 785  
Like a tempest through the air;  
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,  
Woundless though in heart or limb.

*Prometheus.* Spirits! how know ye this shall be?

*Chorus.*

In the atmosphere we breathe, 790  
As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,  
From Spring gathering up beneath,  
Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,  
And the wandering herdsman know  
That the white-thorn soon will blow: 795  
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,  
When they struggle to increase,  
Are to us as soft winds be  
To shepherd boys, the prophecy  
Which begins and ends in thee. 800

*Ione.* Where are the Spirits fled?

*Panthea.*

Only a sense  
Remains of them, like the omnipotence  
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute  
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,

Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul,  
Like echoes through long caverns, wind and roll. 805

*Prometheus.* How fair these airborne shapes! and yet I feel  
Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,  
Asia! who, when my being overflowed,  
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine 810  
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.  
All things are still: alas! how heavily  
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;  
Though I should dream I could even sleep with grief  
If slumber were denied not. I would fain 815  
Be what it is my destiny to be,  
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,  
Or sink into the original gulf of things:  
There is no agony, and no solace left;  
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more. 820

*Panthea.* Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee  
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when  
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her?

*Prometheus.* I said all hope was vain but love: thou lovest.

*Panthea.* Deeply in truth; but the eastern star looks white,  
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale, 826  
The scene of her sad exile; rugged once  
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine;  
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,  
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow 830  
Among the woods and waters, from the aether  
Of her transforming presence, which would fade  
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

## ACT II

SCENE I.—*Morning. A lovely Vale in the Indian Caucasus. ASIA alone.*

*Asia.* From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended:  
Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes  
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,  
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,  
Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended 5  
Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake, O Spring!  
O child of many winds! As suddenly  
Thou comest as the memory of a dream,  
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet;  
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up 10  
As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds  
The desert of our life.

This is the season, this the day, the hour;  
 At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,  
 Too long desired, too long delaying, come! 15  
 How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl!  
 The point of one white star is quivering still  
 Deep in the orange light of widening morn  
 Beyond the purple mountains: through a chasm  
 Of wind-divided mist the darker lake 20  
 Reflects it: now it wanes: it gleams again  
 As the waves fade, and as the burning threads  
 Of woven cloud unravel in pale air:  
 'Tis lost! and through yon peaks of cloud-like snow  
 The roseate sunlight quivers: hear I not 25  
 The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes  
 Winnowing the crimson dawn? [PANTHEA enters.

I feel, I see  
 Those eyes which burn through smiles that fade in tears,  
 Like stars half quenched in mists of silver dew.  
 Belovèd and most beautiful, who wearest 30  
 The shadow of that soul by which I live,  
 How late thou art! the spherèd sun had climbed  
 The sea; my heart was sick with hope, before  
 The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

*Panthea.* Pardon, great Sister! but my wings were faint  
 With the delight of a remembered dream, 36  
 As are the noontide plumes of summer winds  
 Sate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep  
 Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm  
 Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy 40  
 Unhappy love, had made, through use and pity,  
 Both love and woe familiar to my heart  
 As they had grown to thine: erewhile I slept  
 Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean  
 Within dim bowers of green and purple moss, 45  
 Our young Ione's soft and milky arms  
 Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,  
 While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within  
 The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom:  
 But not as now, since I am made the wind 50  
 Which fails beneath the music that I bear  
 Of thy most wordless converse; since dissolved  
 Into the sense with which love talks, my rest  
 Was troubled and yet sweet; my waking hours  
 Too full of care and pain.

*Asia.* Lift up thine eyes, 55  
 And let me read thy dream.

*Panther* As I have said

With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.  
 The mountain mists, condensing at our voice  
 Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,  
 From the keen ice shielding our linkèd sleep. 60  
 Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.  
 But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs  
 Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night  
 Grew radiant with the glory of that form  
 Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell 65  
 Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,  
 Faint with intoxication of keen joy:  
 'Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world  
 With loveliness—more fair than aught but her,  
 Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me.' 70  
 I lifted them: the overpowering light  
 Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er  
 By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,  
 And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,  
 Steamed forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere 75  
 Which wrapped me in its all-dissolving power,  
 As the warm aether of the morning sun  
 Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.  
 I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt  
 His presence flow and mingle through my blood 80  
 Till it became his life, and his grew mine,  
 And I was thus absorbed, until it passed,  
 And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,  
 Gathering again in drops upon the pines,  
 And tremulous as they, in the deep night 85  
 My being was condensed; and as the rays  
 Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear  
 His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died  
 Like footsteps of weak melody: thy name  
 Among the many sounds alone I heard 90  
 Of what might be articulate; though still  
 I listened through the night when sound was none.  
 Ione wakened then, and said to me:  
 'Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night?  
 I always knew what I desired before, 95  
 Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.  
 But now I cannot tell thee what I seek;  
 I know not; something sweet, since it is sweet  
 Even to desire; it is thy sport, false sister;  
 Thou hast discovered some enchantment old, 100  
 Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept  
 And mingled it with thine: for when just now  
 We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips

The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth  
 Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,  
 Quivered between our intertwining arms.' 105  
 I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,  
 But fled to thee.

*Asia.* Thou speakest, but thy words  
 Are as the air: I feel them not: Oh, lift  
 Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul! 110

*Panthea.* I lift them though they droop beneath the load  
 Of that they would express: what canst thou see  
 But thine own fairest shadow imaged there?

*Asia.* Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven  
 Contracted to two circles underneath 115  
 Their long, fine lashes; dark, far, measureless,  
 Orb within orb, and line through line inwoven.

*Panthea.* Why lookest thou as if a spirit passed?

*Asia.* There is a change: beyond their inmost depth  
 I see a shade, a shape: 'tis He, arrayed 120  
 In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread  
 Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.  
 Prometheus, it is thine! depart not yet!  
 Say not those smiles that we shall meet again  
 Within that bright pavilion which their beams 125  
 Shall build o'er the waste world? The dream is told.  
 What shape is that between us? Its rude hair  
 Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard  
 Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air,  
 For through its gray robe gleams the golden dew 130  
 Whose stars the noon has quenched not.

*Dream.* Follow! Follow!

*Panthea.* It is mine other dream.

*Asia.* It disappears.

*Panthea.* It passes now into my mind. Methought  
 As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds  
 Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree, 135  
 When swift from the white Scythian wilderness  
 A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost:  
 I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;  
 But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells  
 Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief, 140  
 O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

*Asia.* As you speak, your words  
 Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep  
 With shapes. Methought among these lawns together  
 We wandered, underneath the young gray dawn,  
 And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds 145  
 Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains

Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind;  
 And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,  
 Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently;  
 And there was more which I remember not: 150  
 But on the shadows of the morning clouds,  
 Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written  
 FOLLOW, O, FOLLOW! as they vanished by;  
 And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,  
 The like was stamped, as with a withering fire; 155  
 A wind arose among the pines; it shook  
 The clinging music from their boughs, and then  
 Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,  
 Were heard: O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME!  
 And then I said: 'Panthea, look on me.' 160  
 But in the depth of those belovèd eyes  
 Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

*Echo.* Follow, follow!

*Panthea.* The crags, this clear spring morning, mock  
 our voices  
 As they were spirit-tongued.

*Asia.* It is some being  
 Around the crags. What fine clear sounds! O, list! 165

*Echoes (unseen).*

Echoes we: listen!

We cannot stay:

As dew-stars glisten

Then fade away—

Child of Ocean!

17

*Asia.* Hark! Spirits speak. The liquid responses  
 Of their aëreal tongues yet sound.

*Panthea.* I hear.

*Echoes.*

O, follow, follow,

As our voice recedeth

Through the caverns hollow, 175

Where the forest spreadeth;

(*More distant.*)

O, follow, follow!

Through the caverns hollow,

As the song floats thou pursue,

Where the wild bee never flew, 180

Through the noontide darkness deep,

By the odour-breathing sleep

Of faint night flowers, and the waves

At the fountain-lighted caves,

While our music, wild and sweet, 185  
 Mocks thy gently falling feet,  
 Child of Ocean!

*Asia.* Shall we pursue the sound? It grows more faint  
 And distant.

*Panthea.* List! the strain floats nearer now.

*Echoes.*

In the world unknown 190  
 Sleeps a voice unspoken;  
 By thy step alone  
 Can its rest be broken;  
 Child of Ocean!

*Asia.* How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind! 195

*Echoes.*

O, follow, follow!  
 Through the caverns hollow,  
 As the song floats thou pursue,  
 By the woodland noontide dew;  
 By the forest, lakes, and fountains, 200  
 Through the many-folded mountains;  
 To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms,  
 Where the Earth reposed from spasms,  
 On the day when He and thou  
 Parted, to commingle now; 205  
 Child of Ocean!

*Asia.* Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,  
 And follow, ere the voices fade away.

SCENE II.—*A Forest, intermingled with Rocks and Caverns. ASIA and  
 PANTHEA pass into it. Two young Fauns are sitting on a Rock lis-  
 tening.*

*Semichorus I. of Spirits.*

The path through which that lovely twain  
 Have passed, by cedar, pine, and yew,  
 And each dark tree that ever grew,  
 Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue;  
 Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain, 5  
 Can pierce its interwoven bowers,  
 Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,  
 Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,  
 Between the trunks of the hoar trees,  
 Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers 10  
 Of the green laurel, blown anew;  
 And bends, and then fades silently,  
 One frail and fair anemone:  
 Or when some star of many a one



That climbs and wanders through steep night, 15  
 Has found the cleft through which alone  
 Beams fall from high those depths upon  
 Ere it is borne away, away,  
 By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,  
 It scatters drops of golden light, 20  
 Like lines of rain that ne'er unite:  
 And the gloom divine is all around,  
 And underneath is the mossy ground.

*Semichorus II.*

There the voluptuous nightingales,  
 Are awake through all the broad noonday. 25  
 When one with bliss or sadness fails,  
 And through the windless ivy-boughs,  
 Sick with sweet love, droops dying away  
 On its mate's music-panting bosom;  
 Another from the swinging blossom, 30  
 Watching to catch the languid close  
 Of the last strain, then lifts on high  
 The wings of the weak melody,  
 'Till some new strain of feeling bear  
 The song, and all the woods are mute; 35  
 When there is heard through the dim air  
 The rush of wings, and rising there  
 Like many a lake-surrounded flute,  
 Sounds overflow the listener's brain  
 So sweet, that joy is almost pain. 40

*Semichorus I.*

There those enchanted eddies play  
 Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,  
 By Demogorgon's mighty law,  
 With melting rapture, or sweet awe,  
 All spirits on that secret way; 45  
 As inland boats are driven to Ocean  
 Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw:  
 And first there comes a gentle sound  
 To those in talk or slumber bound,  
 And wakes the destined soft emotion,— 50  
 Attracts, impels them; those who saw  
 Say from the breathing earth behind  
 There steams a plume-uplifting wind  
 Which drives them on their path, while they  
 Believe their own swift wings and feet 55  
 The sweet desires within obey:  
 And so they float upon their way,

Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,  
 The storm of sound is driven along,  
     Sucked up and hurrying: as they fleet 60  
     Behind, its gathering billows meet  
 And to the fatal mountain bear  
 Like clouds amid the yielding air.

*First Faun.* Canst thou imagine where those spirits live  
 Which make such delicate music in the woods? 65  
 We haunt within the least frequented caves  
 And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,  
 Yet never meet them, though we hear them oft:  
 Where may they hide themselves?

*Second Faun.* 'Tis hard to tell:  
 I have heard those more skilled in spirits say, 70  
 The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun  
 Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave  
 The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,  
 Are the pavilions where such dwell and float  
 Under the green and golden atmosphere 75  
 Which noontide kindles through the woven leaves;  
 And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,  
 The which they breathed within those lucent domes,  
 Ascends to flow like meteors through the night,  
 They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed, 80  
 And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire  
 Under the waters of the earth again.

*First Faun.* If such live thus, have others other lives,  
 Under pink blossoms or within the bells  
 Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep, 85  
 Or on their dying odours, when they die,  
 Or in the sunlight of the spherèd dew?

*Second Faun.* Ay, many more which we may well divine.  
 But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,  
 And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn, 90  
 And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs  
 Of Fate, and Chance, and God, and Chaos old,  
 And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,  
 And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth  
 One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer 95  
 Our solitary twilights, and which charm  
 To silence the unenvying nightingales.

SCENE III.—*A Pinnacle of Rock among Mountains.*  
 ASIA and PANTHEA.

*Panthea.* Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm  
 Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,

Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,  
 Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up  
 Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth, 5  
 And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,  
 That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain  
 To deep intoxication; and uplift,  
 Like Mænads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe!  
 The voice which is contagion to the world. 10

*Asia.* Fit throne for such a Power! Magnificent!  
 How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be  
 The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,  
 Though evil stain its work, and it should be  
 Like its creation, weak yet beautiful, 15  
 I could fall down and worship that and thee.  
 Even now my heart adareth: Wonderful!  
 Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain:  
 Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,  
 As a lake, paving in the morning sky, 20  
 With azure waves which burst in silver light,  
 Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on  
 Under the curdling winds, and islanding  
 The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,  
 Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests, 25  
 'Gim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumèd caves,  
 And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist;  
 And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains  
 From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling  
 The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray, 30  
 From some Atlantic islet scattered up,  
 Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.  
 The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl  
 Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines,  
 Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast, 35  
 Awful as silence. Hark! the rushing snow!  
 The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass,  
 Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there  
 Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds  
 As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth 40  
 Is loosened, and the nations echo round,  
 Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

*Panthea.* Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking  
 In crimson foam, even at our feet! it rises  
 As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon 45  
 Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

*Asia.* The fragments of the clouds are scattered up;  
 The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair;  
 Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes; my brain

Grows dizzy; see'st thou shapes within the mist? 50

*Panthea.* A countenance with beckoning smiles: there burns  
An azure fire within its golden locks!  
Another and another: hark! they speak!

*Song of Spirits.*

To the deep, to the deep,  
Down, down! 55

Through the shade of sleep,  
Through the cloudy strife  
Of Death and of Life;  
Through the veil and the bar  
Of things which seem and are 60

Even to the steps of the remotest throne,  
Down, down!

While the sound whirls around,  
Down, down! 65

As the fawn draws the hound,  
As the lightning the vapour,  
As a weak moth the taper;  
Death, despair; love, sorrow;  
Time both; to-day, to-morrow;  
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone, 70  
Down, down!

Through the gray, void abysm,  
Down, down!

Where the air is no prism,  
And the moon and stars are not, 75  
And the cavern-crag wear not  
The radiance of Heaven,  
Nor the gloom to Earth given,  
Where there is One pervading, One alone, 80  
Down, down!

In the depth of the deep,  
Down, down!

Like veiled lightning asleep,  
Like the spark nursed in embers,  
The last look Love remembers, 85  
Like a diamond, which shines  
On the dark wealth of mines,  
A spell is treasured but for thee alone.  
Down, down!

We have bound thee, we guide thee; 90  
Down, down!

With the bright form beside thee;  
 Resist not the weakness,  
 Such strength is in meekness  
 That the Eternal, the Immortal, 95  
 Must unloose through life's portal  
 The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne  
 By that alone.

SCENE IV.—*The Cave of Demogorgon. ASIA and PANTHEA.*

*Panthea.* What veiled form sits on that ebon throne?

*Asia.* The veil has fallen.

*Panthea.* I see a mighty darkness  
 Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom  
 Dart round, as light from the meridian sun.  
 —Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb, 5  
 Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is  
 A living Spirit.

*Demogorgon.* Ask what thou wouldst know.

*Asia.* What canst thou tell?

*Demogorgon.* All things thou dar'st demand.

*Asia.* Who made the living world?

*Demogorgon.* God.

*Asia.* Who made all

That it contains? thought, passion, reason, will, 10  
 Imagination?

*Demogorgon.* God: Almighty God.

*Asia.* Who made that sense which, when the winds of Spring  
 In rarest visitation, or the voice  
 Of one beloved heard in youth alone,  
 Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim 15  
 The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,  
 And leaves this peopled earth a solitude  
 When it returns no more?

*Demogorgon.* Merciful God.

*Asia.* And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,  
 Which from the links of the great chain of things, 20  
 To every thought within the mind of man  
 Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels  
 Under the load towards the pit of death;  
 Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate;  
 And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood; 25  
 Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech  
 Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day;  
 And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?

*Demogorgon.* He reigns.

*Asia.* Utter his name: a world pining in pain

Asks but his name: curses shall drag him down. 30  
*Demogorgon.* He reigns.  
*Asia.* I feel, I know it: who?  
*Demogorgon.* He reigns.  
*Asia.* Who reigns? There was the Heaven and Earth at first,  
 And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose throne  
 Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state  
 Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway, 35  
 As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves  
 Before the wind or sun has withered them  
 And semivital worms; but he refused  
 The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,  
 The skill which wields the elements, the thought 40  
 Which pierces this dim universe like light,  
 Self-empire, and the majesty of love;  
 For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus  
 Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,  
 And with this law alone, 'Let man be free,' 45  
 Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.  
 To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be  
 Omnipotent but friendless is to reign;  
 And Jove now reigned; for on the race of man  
 First famine, and then toil, and then disease, 50  
 Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,  
 Fell; and the unseasonable seasons drove  
 With alternating shafts of frost and fire,  
 Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves:  
 And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent, 55  
 And mad disquietude, and shadows idle  
 Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,  
 So ruining the lair wherein they raged.  
 Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes  
 Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers, 60  
 Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,  
 That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings  
 The shape of Death; and Love he sent to bind  
 The disunited tendrils of that vine  
 Which bears the wine of life, the human heart; 65  
 And he tamed fire which like some beast of prey,  
 Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath  
 The frown of man; and tortured to his will  
 Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,  
 And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms 70  
 Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.  
 He gave man speech, and speech created thought,  
 Which is the measure of the universe;  
 And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,

Which shook, but fell not; and the harmonious mind 75  
 Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song;  
 And music lifted up the listening spirit  
 Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,  
 Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound;  
 And human hands first mimicked and then mocked, 80  
 With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,  
 The human form, till marble grew divine;  
 And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see  
 Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.  
 He told the hidden power of herbs and springs, 85  
 And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.  
 He taught the implicated orbits woven  
 Of the wide-wandering stars; and how the sun  
 Changes his lair, and by what secret spell  
 The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye 90  
 Gazes not on the interlunar sea:  
 He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,  
 The tempest-wingèd chariots of the Ocean,  
 And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then  
 Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed  
 The warm winds, and the azure aether shone, 96  
 And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.  
 Such, the alleviations of his state,  
 Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs  
 Withering in destined pain: but who rains down 100  
 Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while  
 Man looks on his creation like a God  
 And sees that it is glorious, drives him on,  
 The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,  
 The outcast, the abandoned, the alone? 105  
 Not Jove: while yet his frown shook Heaven, ay, when  
 His adversary from adamantine chains  
 Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare  
 Who is his master? Is he too a slave?  
*Demogorgon.* All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil:  
 Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no. 111  
*Asia.* Whom calledst thou God?  
*Demogorgon.* I spoke but as ye speak,  
 For Jove is the supreme of living things.  
*Asia.* Who is the master of the slave?  
*Demogorgon.* If the abysm  
 Could vomit forth its secrets. . . . But a voice 115  
 Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;  
 For what would it avail to bid thee gaze  
 On the revolving world? What to bid speak  
 Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change? To these

- All things are subject but eternal Love. 120  
*Asia.* So much I asked before, and my heart gave  
 The response thou hast given; and of such truths  
 Each to itself must be the oracle.  
 One more demand; and do thou answer me  
 As mine own soul would answer, did it know 125  
 That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise  
 Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world:  
 When shall the destined hour arrive?  
*Demogorgon.* Behold!  
*Asia.* The rocks are cloven, and through the purple night  
 I see cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds 130  
 Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands  
 A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.  
 Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,  
 And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:  
 Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink 135  
 With eager lips the wind of their own speed,  
 As if the thing they loved fled on before,  
 And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks  
 Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all  
 Sweep onward.  
*Demogorgon.* These are the immortal Hours, 140  
 Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.  
*Asia.* A spirit with a dreadful countenance  
 Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulf.  
 Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,  
 Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak! 145  
*Spirit.* I am the shadow of a destiny  
 More dread than is my aspect: ere yon planet  
 Has set, the darkness which ascends with me  
 Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.  
*Asia.* What meanest thou?  
*Panthea.* That terrible shadow floats 151  
 Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke  
 Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.  
 Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly  
 Terrified: watch its path among the stars  
 Blackening the night!  
*Asia.* Thus I am answered: strange! 155  
*Panthea.* See, near the verge, another chariot stays;  
 An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,  
 Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim  
 Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit  
 That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope; 160  
 How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light  
 Lures winged insects through the lampless air.



*Spirit.*

My coursers are fed with the lightning,  
 They drink of the whirlwind's stream,  
 And when the red morning is bright'ning 163  
 They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;  
 They have strength for their swiftness I deem,  
 Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;  
 I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon; 170  
 Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle  
 We encircle the earth and the moon:  
 We shall rest from long labours at noon:  
 Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

SCENE V.—*The Car pauses within a Cloud on the top of a snowy Mountain. ASIA, PANTHEA, and the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.*

*Spirit.*

On the brink of the night and the morning  
 My coursers are wont to respire;  
 But the Earth has just whispered a warning  
 That their flight must be swifter than fire:  
 They shall drink the hot speed of desire! 5

*Asia.* Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath  
 Would give them swifter speed.

*Spirit.* Alas! it could not.

*Panthea.* Oh Spirit! pause, and tell whence is the light  
 Which fills this cloud? the sun is yet unrisen.

*Spirit.* The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo 10  
 Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light  
 Which fills this vapour, as the æreal hue  
 Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,  
 Flows from thy mighty sister.

*Panthea.* Yes, I feel—

*Asia.* What is it with thee, sister? Thou art pale. 15

*Panthea.* How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee;  
 I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure  
 The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change  
 Is working in the elements, which suffer  
 Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell 20  
 That on the day when the clear hyaline  
 Was cloven at thine uprise, and thou didst stand  
 Within a veined shell, which floated on  
 Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,

Among the Ægean isles, and by the shores 25  
 Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere  
 Of the sun's fire filling the living world,  
 Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven  
 And the deep ocean and the sunless caves  
 And all that dwells within them; till grief cast 30  
 Eclipse upon the soul from which it came:  
 Such art thou now; nor is it I alone,  
 Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,  
 But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.  
 Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love 35  
 Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not  
 The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List! [Music.  
*Asia.* Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his  
 Whose echoes they are: yet all love is sweet,  
 Given or returned. Common as light is love, 40  
 And its familiar voice wearies not ever.  
 Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,  
 It makes the reptile equal to the God:  
 They who inspire it most are fortunate,  
 As I am now; but those who feel it most 45  
 Are happier still, after long sufferings,  
 As I shall soon become.

*Panthea.*

List! Spirits speak.

*Voices in the Air, singing.*

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle  
 With their love the breath between them;  
 And thy smiles before they dwindle 50  
 Make the cold air fire; then screen them  
 In those looks, where whoso gazes  
 Faints, entangled in their mazes.  
  
 Child of Light! thy limbs are burning  
 Through the vest which seems to hide them; 55  
 As the radiant lines of morning  
 Through the clouds ere they divide them;  
 And this atmosphere divinest  
 Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.  
  
 Fair are others; none beholds thee, 60  
 But thy voice sounds low and tender  
 Like the fairest, for it folds thee  
 From the sight, that liquid splendour,  
 And all feel, yet see thee never,  
 As I feel now, lost for ever! 65

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest  
 Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,  
 And the souls of whom thou lovest  
 Walk upon the winds with lightness,  
 Till they fail, as I am failing, 70  
 Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

*Asia.*

My soul is an enchanted boat,  
 Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float  
 Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;  
 And thine doth like an angel sit 75  
 Beside a helm conducting it,  
 Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.  
 It seems to float ever, for ever,  
 Upon that many-winding river,  
 Between mountains, woods, abysses, 80  
 A paradise of wildernesses!  
 Till, like one in slumber bound,  
 Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,  
 Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound:

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions 85  
 In music's most serene dominions;  
 Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.  
 And we sail on, away, afar,  
 Without a course, without a star,  
 But, by the instinct of sweet music driven; 90  
 Till through Elysian garden islets  
 By thee, most beautiful of pilots,  
 Where never mortal pinnacle glided,  
 The boat of my desire is guided:  
 Realms where the air we breathe is love, 95  
 Which in the winds and on the waves doth move,  
 Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have passed Age's icy caves,  
 And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,  
 And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray: 100  
 Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee  
 Of shadow-peopled Infancy,  
 Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day;  
 A paradise of vaulted bowers,  
 Lit by downward-gazing flowers, 105  
 And watery paths that wind between  
 Wildernesses calm and green.

Peopled by shapes too bright to see,  
 And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee;  
 Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously! 110

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

### ACT III

SCENE I.—*Heaven. JUPITER on his Throne; THETIS and the other Deities assembled.*

*Jupiter.* Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share  
 The glory and the strength of him ye serve,  
 Rejoice! henceforth I am omnipotent.  
 All else had been subdued to me; alone  
 The soul of man, like unextinguished fire, 5  
 Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and doubt,  
 And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,  
 Hurling up insurrection, which might make  
 Our antique empire insecure, though built  
 On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear; 10  
 And though my curses through the pendulous air,  
 Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,  
 And cling to it; though under my wrath's night  
 It climbs the crags of life, step after step,  
 Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet, 15  
 It yet remains supreme o'er misery,  
 Aspiring, unrepressed, yet soon to fall:  
 Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,  
 That fatal child, the terror of the earth,  
 Who waits but till the destined hour arrive, 20  
 Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne  
 The dreadful might of ever-living limbs  
 Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,  
 To redescend, and trample out the spark.  
 Pour forth heaven's wine, Idæan Ganymede, 25  
 And let it fill the Dædal cups like fire,  
 And from the flower-inwoven soil divine  
 Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,  
 As dew from earth under the twilight stars:  
 Drink! be the nectar circling through your veins 30  
 The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,  
 Till exultation burst in one wide voice  
 Like music from Elysian winds.

And thou

Ascend beside me, veiled in the light  
 Of the desire which makes thee one with me, 35  
 Thetis. bright image of eternity!

When thou didst cry, 'Insufferable might!  
 God! Spare me! I sustain not the quick flames,  
 The penetrating presence; all my being,  
 Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw 40  
 Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,  
 Sinking through its foundations:' even then  
 Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third  
 Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,  
 Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld, 45  
 Waiting the incarnation, which ascends.  
 (Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels  
 Gridding the winds?) from Demogorgon's throne.  
 Victory! victory! Feel'st thou not, O world,  
 The earthquake of his chariot thundering up 50  
 Olympus?

[*The Car of the HOUR arrives. DEMOGORGON descends,  
 and moves towards the Throne of JUPITER.*]

Awful shape; what art thou? Speak!  
*Demogorgon.* Eternity. Demand no direr name.  
 Descend, and follow me down the abyss.  
 I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child;  
 Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together 55  
 Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.  
 The tyranny of heaven none may retain,  
 Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee:  
 Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny  
 Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead, 60  
 Put forth thy might.

*Jupiter.* Detested prodigy!  
 Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons  
 I trample thee! thou lingerest?

Mercy! mercy!  
 No pity, no release, no respite! Oh,  
 That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge, 65  
 Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,  
 On Caucasus! he would not doom me thus.  
 Gentle, and just, and dreadful, is he not  
 The monarch of the world? What then art thou?  
 No refuge! no appeal!

Sink with me then, 70  
 We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,  
 Even as a vulture and a snake outspent  
 Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,  
 Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock  
 Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire, 75  
 And whelm on them into the bottomless void

This desolated world, and thee, and me,  
The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck  
Of that for which they combated.

Ai! Ai!

The elements obey me not. I sink 80  
Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down.  
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above  
Darkens my fall with victory! Ai, Ai!

SCENE II.—*The Mouth of a great River in the Island Atlantis. OCEAN is discovered reclining near the Shore; APOLLO stands beside him.*

*Ocean.* He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown?

*Apollo.* Ay, when the strife was ended which made dim  
The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,  
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven  
With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts 5  
Of the victorious darkness, as he fell:  
Like the last glare of day's red agony,  
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,  
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

*Ocean.* He sunk to the abyss? To the dark void? 10

*Apollo.* An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud  
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings  
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes  
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded  
By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail 15  
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length  
Prone, and the æreal ice clings over it.

*Ocean.* Henceforth the fields of heaven-reflecting sea  
Which are my realm, will heave, unstained with blood,  
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn 20  
Swayed by the summer air; my streams will flow  
Round many-peopled continents, and round  
Fortunate isles; and from their glassy thrones  
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark  
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see 25  
The floating bark of the light-laden moon  
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,  
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea;  
Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,  
And desolation, and the mingled voice 30  
Of slavery and command; but by the light  
Of wave-reflectd flowers, and floating odours,  
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,  
And sweetest music, such as spirits love.

*Apollo.* And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make 35

My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse  
 Darkens the sphere I guide; but list, I hear  
 The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit  
 That sits i' the morning star.

*Ocean.* Thou must away;  
 Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell: 40  
 The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it  
 With azure calm out of the emerald urns  
 Which stand for ever full beside my throne.

Behold the Nereids under the green sea,  
 Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like stream, 45  
 Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair  
 With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns,  
 Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.

[*A sound of waves is heard.*]

It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.  
 Peace, monster; I come now. Farewell.

*Apollo.* Farewell. 50

SCENE III.—*Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, *the* EARTH,  
 SPIRITS, ASIA, and PANTHEA, borne in the Car with the SPIRIT OF  
 THE HOUR. HERCULES *unbinds* PROMETHEUS, *who descends.*

*Hercules.* Most glorious among Spirits, thus doth strength  
 To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,  
 And thee, who art the form they animate,  
 Minister like a slave.

*Prometheus.* Thy gentle words  
 Are sweeter even than freedom long desired 5  
 And long delayed.

Asia, thou light of life,  
 Shadow of beauty unbeheld: and ye,  
 Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain  
 Sweet to remember, through your love and care:  
 Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave, 10  
 All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,  
 Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,  
 And paved with veined emerald, and a fountain  
 Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.  
 From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears 15  
 Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,  
 Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light:  
 And there is heard the ever-moving air,  
 Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,  
 And bees; and all around are mossy seats, 20  
 And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass;  
 A simple dwelling, which shall be our own;

Where we will sit and talk of time and change,  
 As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged. 25  
 What can hide man from mutability?  
 And if ye sigh, then I will smile; and thou,  
 Ione, shalt chant fragments of sea-music,  
 Until I weep, when ye shall smile away  
 The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.  
 We will entangle buds and flowers and beams 30  
 Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make  
 Strange combinations out of common things,  
 Like human babes in their brief innocence;  
 And we will search, with looks and words of love,  
 For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last, 35  
 Our unexhausted spirits; and like lutes  
 Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,  
 Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,  
 From difference sweet where discord cannot be;  
 And hither come, sped on the charmed winds, 40  
 Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees  
 From every flower aëreal Enna feeds,  
 At their known island-homes in Himera,  
 The echoes of the human world, which tell  
 Of the low voice of love, a'lmost unheard, 45  
 And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,  
 Itself the echo of the heart, and all  
 That tempers or improves man's life, now free;  
 And lovely apparitions,—dim at first,  
 Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright 50  
 From the embrace of beauty (whence the forms  
 Of which these are the phantoms) casts on them  
 The gathered rays which are reality—  
 Shall visit us, the progeny immortal  
 Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy, 55  
 And arts, though unimagined, yet to be.  
 The wandering voices and the shadows these  
 Of all that man becomes, the mediators  
 Of that best worship love, by him and us  
 Given and returned; swift shapes and sounds, which grow  
 More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind, 61  
 And, veil by veil, evil and error fall:  
 Such virtue has the cave and place around.  
 [Turning to the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.  
 For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,  
 Give her that curvèd shell, which Proteus old 65  
 Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it  
 A voice to be accomplished, and which thou  
 Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.



*Ione.* Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely  
 Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell; 70  
 See the pale azure fading into silver  
 Lining it with a soft yet glowing light:  
 Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there?

*Spirit.* It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean:  
 Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange. 75

*Prometheus.* Go, borne over the cities of mankind  
 On whirlwind-footed coursers: once again  
 Outspeed the sun around the orbèd world;  
 And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,  
 Thou breathe into the many-folded shell, 80  
 Loosening its mighty music; it shall be  
 As thunder mingled with clear echoes: then  
 Return; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.  
 And thou, O, Mother Earth!—

*The Earth.* I hear, I feel;  
 Thy lips are on me, and their touch runs down 85  
 Even to the adamantine central gloom  
 Along these marble nerves; 'tis life, 'tis joy,  
 And through my withered, old, and icy frame  
 The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down  
 Circling. Henceforth the many children fair 90  
 Folded in my sustaining arms; all plants,  
 And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,  
 And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,  
 Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,  
 Draining the poison of despair, shall take 95  
 And interchange sweet nutriment; to me  
 Shall they become like sister-antelopes  
 By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind,  
 Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.  
 The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float 100  
 Under the stars like balm: night-folded flowers  
 Shall suck unwithering hues in their repose:  
 And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather  
 Strength for the coming day, and all its joy:  
 And death shall be the last embrace of her 105  
 Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother  
 Folding her child, says, 'Leave me not again.'

*Asia.* Oh, mother! wherefore speak the name of death?  
 Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,  
 Who die?

*The Earth.* It would avail not to reply: 110  
 Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known  
 But to the uncommunicating dead.  
 Death is the veil which those who live call life:

They sleep, and it is lifted: and meanwhile  
 In mild variety the seasons mild 115  
 With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,  
 And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,  
 And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's  
 All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain  
 Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild, 120  
 Shall clothe the forests and the fields, ay, even  
 The crag-built deserts of the barren deep,  
 With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.  
 And thou! There is a cavern where my spirit  
 'Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain 125  
 Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it  
 Became mad too, and built a temple there,  
 And spoke, and were oracular, and lured  
 The erring nations round to mutual war,  
 And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee; 130  
 Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds  
 A violet's exhalation, and it fills  
 With a serener light and crimson air  
 Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around;  
 It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine, 135  
 And the dark linked ivy tangling wild,  
 And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms  
 Which star the winds with points of coloured light,  
 As they rain through them, and bright golden globes  
 Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven, 140  
 And through their veined leaves and amber stems  
 The flowers whose purple and translucent bowls  
 Stand ever mantling with aëreal dew,  
 The drink of spirits: and it circles round,  
 Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams, 145  
 Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,  
 Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.  
 Arise! Appear!

[A SPIRIT rises in the likeness of a winged child.]

This is my torch-bearer;  
 Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing  
 On eyes from which he kindled it anew 150  
 With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,  
 For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,  
 And guide this company beyond the peak  
 Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,  
 And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers, 155  
 Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes  
 With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,  
 And up the green ravine, across the vale,

Beside the windless and crystalline pool,  
 Where ever lies, on unerasing waves, 160  
 The image of a temple, built above,  
 Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,  
 And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,  
 And populous with most living imagery,  
 Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles 165  
 Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.  
 It is deserted now, but once it bore  
 Thy name, Prometheus; there the emulous youths  
 Bore to thy honour through the divine gloom  
 The lamp which was thine emblem; even as those 170  
 Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope  
 Into the grave, across the night of life,  
 As thou hast borne it most triumphantly  
 To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.  
 Beside that temple is the destined cave. 175

SCENE IV.—*A Forest. In the Background a Cave.* PROMETHEUS, ASIA,  
 PANTHEA, IONE, and the SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

*Ione.* Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides  
 Under the leaves! how on its head there burns  
 A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams  
 Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,  
 The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass! 5  
 Knowest thou it?

*Panthea.* It is the delicate spirit  
 That guides the earth through heaven. From afar  
 The populous constellations call that light  
 The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes  
 It floats along the spray of the salt sea, 10  
 Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,  
 Or walks through fields or cities while men sleep,  
 Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,  
 Or through the green waste wilderness, as now,  
 Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned 15  
 It loved our sister Asia, and it came  
 Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light  
 Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted  
 As one bit by a dipsas, and with her  
 It made its childish confidence, and told her 20  
 All it had known or seen, for it saw much,  
 Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and called her—  
 For whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I—  
 Mother, dear mother.

*The Spirit of the Earth (running to Asia)*. Mother, dearest  
 mother;  
 May I then talk with thee as I was wont? 25  
 May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,  
 After thy looks have made them tired of joy?  
 May I then play beside thee the long noons,  
 When work is none in the bright silent air?  
*Asia*. I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth 30  
 Can cherish thee unenvied: speak, I pray:  
 Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.  
*Spirit of the Earth*. Mother, I am grown wiser, though a child  
 Cannot be wise like thee, within this day;  
 And happier too; happier and wiser both. 35  
 Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms,  
 And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs  
 That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever  
 An hindrance to my walks o'er the green world:  
 And that, among the haunts of humankind, 40  
 Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,  
 Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,  
 Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,  
 Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts  
 Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man; 45  
 And women too, ugliest of all things evil,  
 (Though fair, even in a world where thou art fair,  
 When good and kind, free and sincere like thee),  
 When false or frowning made me sick at heart  
 To pass them, though they slept, and I unseen. 50  
 Well, my path lately lay through a great city  
 Into the woody hills surrounding it:  
 A sentinel was sleeping at the gate:  
 When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook  
 The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet 55  
 Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all;  
 A long, long sound, as it would never end:  
 And all the inhabitants leaped suddenly  
 Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,  
 Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet 60  
 The music pealed along. I hid myself  
 Within a fountain in the public square,  
 Where I lay like the reflex of the moon  
 Seen in a wave under green leaves; and soon  
 Those ugly human shapes and visages 65  
 Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,  
 Passed floating through the air, and fading still  
 Into the winds that scattered them; and those  
 From whom they passed seemed mild and lovely forms

After some foul disguise had fallen, and all 70  
 Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise  
 And greetings of delighted wonder, all  
 Went to their sleep again: and when the dawn  
 Came, wouldst thou think that toads, and snakes, and efts,  
 Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were, 75  
 And that with little change of shape or hue:  
 All things had put their evil nature off:  
 I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake  
 Upon a drooping bough with nightshade twined,  
 I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward 80  
 And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,  
 With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay  
 Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky;  
 So, with my thoughts full of these happy changes,  
 We meet again, the happiest change of all. 85  
*Asia.* And never will we part, till thy chaste sister  
 Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon  
 Will look on thy more warm and equal light  
 Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow  
 And love thee.  
*Spirit of the Earth.* What; as Asia loves Prometheus? 90  
*Asia.* Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough.  
 Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes  
 To multiply your lovely selves, and fill  
 With spherèd fires the interlunar air?  
*Spirit of the Earth.* Nay, mother, while my sister trims her lamp  
 'Tis hard I should go darkling.  
*Asia.* Listen; look! 96  
 [The SPIRIT OF THE HOUR enters.  
*Prometheus.* We feel what thou hast heard and seen: yet speak.  
*Spirit of the Hour.* Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder  
 filled  
 The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,  
 There was a change: the impalpable thin air 100  
 And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,  
 As if the sense of love dissolved in them  
 Had folded itself round the spherèd world.  
 My vision then grew clear, and I could see  
 Into the mysteries of the universe: 105  
 Dizzy as with delight I floated down,  
 Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,  
 My coursers sought their birthplace in the sun,  
 Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil,  
 Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire; 110  
 And where my moonlike car will stand within  
 A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms

Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,  
 And you fair nymphs looking the love we feel,—  
 In memory of the tidings it has borne,— 115  
 Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,  
 Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,  
 And open to the bright and liquid sky.  
 Yoked to it by an amphisbaenic snake  
 The likeness of those wingèd steeds will mock 120  
 The flight from which they find repose. Alas,  
 Whither has wandered now my partial tongue  
 When all remains untold which ye would hear?  
 As I have said, I floated to the earth:  
 It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss 125  
 To move, to breathe, to be; I wandering went  
 Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,  
 And first was disappointed not to see  
 Such mighty change as I had felt within  
 Expressed in outward things; but soon I looked, 130  
 And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked  
 One with the other even as spirits do,  
 None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear,  
 Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows  
 No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell, 135  
 'All hope abandon ye who enter here;'  
 None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear  
 Gazed on another's eye of cold command,  
 Until the subject of a tyrant's will  
 Became, worse fate, the abject of his own, 140  
 Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.  
 None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines  
 Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak;  
 None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart  
 The sparks of love and hope till there remained 145  
 Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,  
 And the wretch crept a vampire among men,  
 Infecting all with his own hideous ill;  
 None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk  
 Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes, 150  
 Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy  
 With such a self-mistrust as has no name.  
 And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind  
 As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew  
 On the wide earth, past; gentle radiant forms, 155  
 From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;  
 Speaking the wisdom once *they* could not think,  
 Looking emotions once *they* feared to feel,  
 And changed to all which once *they* dared not be,

Vet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride, 160  
 Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,  
 The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,  
 Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgement-seats, and prisons; wherein,  
 And beside which, by wretched men were borne 165  
 Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes  
 Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,  
 Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,  
 The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame,  
 Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth 170  
 In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs  
 Of those who were their conquerors: mouldering round,  
 These imaged to the pride of kings and priests  
 A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide  
 As is the world it wasted, and are now 175  
 But an astonishment; even so the tools  
 And emblems of its last captivity,  
 Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,  
 Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.  
 And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,— 180  
 Which, under many a name and many a form  
 Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execrable,  
 Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;  
 And which the nations, panic-stricken, served  
 With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love  
 Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless, 186  
 And slain amid men's unreclaiming tears,  
 Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,—  
 Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines:  
 The painted veil, by those who were, called life, 190  
 Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,  
 All men believed or hoped, is torn aside;  
 The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains  
 Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man  
 Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless, 195  
 Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king  
 Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man  
 Passionless?—no, yet free from guilt or pain,  
 Which were, for his will made or suffered them,  
 Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves, 200  
 From chance, and death, and mutability,  
 The clogs of that which else might oversoar  
 The loftiest star of unascended heaven,  
 Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

## ACT IV

SCENE.—*A Part of the Forest near the Cave of PROMETHEUS. PANTHEA and IONE are sleeping: they awaken gradually during the first Song.*

*Voice of unseen Spirits.*

The pale stars are gone!  
 For the sun, their swift shepherd, 3  
 To their folds them compelling,  
 In the depths of the dawn,  
 Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee 5  
 Beyond his blue dwelling,  
 As fawns flee the leopard.  
 But where are ye?

¶ *Train of dark Forms and Shadows passes by confusedly, singing.*

Here, oh, here:  
 We bear the bier 10  
 Of the Father of many a cancelled year  
 Spectres we  
 Of the dead Hours be,  
 We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.  
  
 Strew, oh, strew 15  
 Hair, not yew!  
 Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!  
 Be the faded flowers  
 Of Death's bare bowers  
 Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours! 20  
  
 Haste, oh, haste!  
 As shades are chased,  
 Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.  
 We melt away,  
 Like dissolving spray, 25  
 From the children of a diviner day,  
 With the lullaby  
 Of winds that die  
 On the bosom of their own harmony!

*Ione.*

What dark forms were they? 30

*Panthea.*

The past Hours weak and gray,  
 With the spoil which their toil  
 Raked together  
 From the conquest but One could foil.



*Ione.*

Have they passed?

*Panthea.*

They have passed;  
They outspeeded the blast,  
While 'tis said, they are fled:

31

*Ione.*

Whither, oh, whither?

*Panthea.*

'To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

*Voice of unseen Spirits.*

Bright clouds float in heaven,  
Dew-stars gleam on earth,  
Waves assemble on ocean,  
They are gathered and driven  
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee!  
They shake with emotion,  
They dance in their mirth.  
But where are ye?

40

45

The pine boughs are singing  
Old songs with new gladness,  
The billows and fountains  
Fresh music are flinging,  
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea;  
The storms mock the mountains  
With the thunder of gladness.  
But where are ye?

50

55

*Ione.* What charioteers are these?

*Panthea.*

Where are their chariots?

*Semichorus of Hours.*

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth  
Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep  
Which covered our being and darkened our birth  
In the deep.

*A Voice.*

In the deep?

*Semichorus II.*

Oh, below the deep.

60

*Semichorus I.*

An hundred ages we had been kept  
 Cradled in visions of hate and care,  
 And each one who waked as his brother slept,  
 Found the truth—

*Semichorus II.*

Worse than his visions were!

*Semichorus I.*

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep;  
 We have known the voice of Love in dreams;  
 We have felt the wand of Power, and leap—

65

*Semichorus II.*

As the billows leap in the morning beams!

*Chorus.*

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,  
 Pierce with song heaven's silent light,  
 Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,  
 To check its flight ere the cave of Night.

70

Once the hungry Hours were hounds  
 Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,  
 And it limped and stumbled with many wounds  
 Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

75

But now, oh weave the mystic measure  
 Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,  
 Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,  
 Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

*A Voice.*

Unite!

80

*Panthea.* See, where the Spirits of the human mind  
 Wrapped in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

*Chorus of Spirits.*

We join the throng  
 Of the dance and the song,  
 By the whirlwind of gladness borne along;

85

As the flying-fish leap  
 From the Indian deep,  
 And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

*Chorus of Hours.*

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,  
 For sandals of lightning are on your feet, 90  
 And your wings are soft and swift as thought,  
 And your eyes are as love which is veiled not?

*Chorus of Spirits.*

We come from the mind  
 Of human kind  
 Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind, 95  
 Now 'tis an ocean  
 Of clear emotion,  
 A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss  
 Of wonder and bliss, 100  
 Whose caverns are crystal palaces;  
 From those skiey towers  
 Where Thought's crowned powers  
 Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!

From the dim recesses 105  
 Of woven caresses,  
 Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses  
 From the azure isles,  
 Where sweet Wisdom smiles,  
 Delaying your ships with her siren wiles. 110

From the temples high  
 Of Man's ear and eye,  
 Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy;  
 From the murmurings  
 Of the unsealed springs 115  
 Where Science bedews her Dædal wings.

Years after years,  
 Through blood, and tears,  
 And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears;  
 We waded and flew, 120  
 And the islets were few  
 Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,  
 Are sandalled with calm,  
 And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm; 125

And, beyond our eyes,  
 The human love lies  
 Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

*Chorus of Spirits and Hours.*

Then weave the web of the mystic measure;  
 From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth,  
 Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure, 131  
 Fill the dance and the music of mirth,  
 As the waves of a thousand streams rush by  
 To an ocean of splendour and harmony!

*Chorus of Spirits.*

Our spoil is won, 135  
 Our task is done,  
 We are free to dive, or soar, or run;  
 Beyond and around,  
 Or within the bound  
 Which clips the world with darkness round. 140

We'll pass the eyes  
 Of the starry skies  
 Into the hoar deep to colonize;  
 Death, Chaos, and Night,  
 From the sound of our flight, 145  
 Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,  
 And the Spirit of Might,  
 Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight;  
 And Love, Thought, and Breath, 150  
 The powers that quell Death,  
 Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build  
 In the void's loose field  
 A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield; 155  
 We will take our plan  
 From the new world of man,  
 And our work shall be called the Promethean.

*Chorus of Hours.*

Break the dance, and scatter the song;  
 Let some depart, and some remain. 160

*Semichorus I.*

We, beyond heaven, are driven along:

*Semichorus II.*

Us the enchantments of earth retain:

*Semichorus I.*

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,  
With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,  
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be. 165

*Semichorus II.*

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,  
Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,  
With the powers of a world of perfect light.

*Semichorus I.*

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,  
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear 170  
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

*Semichorus II.*

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,  
And the happy forms of its death and birth  
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

*Chorus of Hours and Spirits.*

Break the dance, and scatter the song, 175  
Let some depart, and some remain,  
Wherever we fly we lead along  
In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong,  
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

*Panthea.* Ha! they are gone!

*Ione.* Yet feel you no delight 180  
From the past sweetness?

*Panthea.* As the bare green hill  
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,  
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water  
To the unpavilioned sky!

*Ione.* Even whilst we speak  
New notes arise. What is that awful sound? 185

*Panthea.* 'Tis the deep music of the rolling world  
Kindling within the strings of the waved air  
Æolian modulation.

*Ione.* Listen too,  
How every pause is filled with under-notes,  
Clear, silver, icy, keen, awakening tones, 190

Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,  
 As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air  
 And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

*Panthea.* But see where through two openings in the forest  
 Which hanging branches overcanopy, 195  
 And where two runnels of a rivulet,  
 Between the close moss violet-inwoven,  
 Have made their path of melody, like sisters  
 Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,  
 Turning their dear disunion to an isle 200  
 Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts;  
 Two visions of strange radiance float upon  
 The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,  
 Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet  
 Under the ground and through the windless air. 205

*Ionc.* I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,  
 In which the Mother of the Months is borne  
 By ebbing light into her western cave.  
 When she upsprings from interlunar dreams;  
 O'er which is curved an orblike canopy 210  
 Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods,  
 Distinctly seen through that dusk æry veil,  
 Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;  
 Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,  
 Such as the genii of the thunderstorm 215  
 Pile on the floor of the illumined sea  
 When the sun rushes under it; they roll  
 And move and grow as with an inward wind;  
 Within it sits a wingèd infant, white  
 Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow, 220  
 Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,  
 Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds  
 Of its white robe, woof of ethereal pearl.  
 Its hair is white, the brightness of white light  
 Scattered in strings; yet its two eyes are heavens 225  
 Of liquid darkness, which the Deity  
 Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured  
 From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,  
 Tempering the cold and radiant air around,  
 With fire that is not brightness; in its hand 230  
 It sways a quivering moonbeam, from whose point  
 A guiding power directs the chariot's prow  
 Over its wheelèd clouds, which as they roll  
 Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,  
 Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew. 235

*Panthea.* And from the other opening in the wood  
 Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,

A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,  
 Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass  
 Flow, as through empty space, music and light: 240  
 Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,  
 Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden,  
 Sphere within sphere; and every space between  
 Peopled with unimaginable shapes,  
 Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep, 245  
 Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl  
 Over each other with a thousand motions,  
 Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,  
 And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,  
 Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on, 250  
 Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,  
 Intelligible words and music wild.  
 With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb  
 Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist  
 Of elemental subtlety, like light; 255  
 And the wild odour of the forest flowers,  
 The music of the living grass and air,  
 The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams  
 Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,  
 Seem kneaded into one æreal mass 260  
 Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,  
 Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,  
 Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,  
 On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,  
 The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep, 265  
 And you can see its little lips are moving,  
 Amid the changing light of their own smiles,  
 Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

*Ione.* 'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

*Panthea.* And from a star upon its forehead, shoot, 270  
 Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears  
 With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined,  
 Embleming heaven and earth united now,  
 Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel  
 Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought, 275  
 Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,  
 And perpendicular now, and now transverse,  
 Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,  
 Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart;  
 Infinite mines of adamant and gold, 280  
 Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,  
 And caverns on crystalline columns poised  
 With vegetable silver overspread;  
 Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs

Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed, 285  
 Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops  
 With kindly, ermine snow. The beams flash on  
 And make appear the melancholy ruins  
 Of cancelled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;  
 Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms, and spears, 290  
 And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels  
 Of scythèd chariots, and the emblazonry  
 Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,  
 Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems  
 Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin! 295  
 The wrecks beside of many a city vast,  
 Whose population which the earth grew over  
 Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie,  
 Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,  
 Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes 300  
 Huddled in gray annihilation, split,  
 Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these,  
 The anatomies of unknown wingèd things,  
 And fishes which were isles of living scale,  
 And serpents, body chains, twisted around 305  
 The iron crags, or within heaps of dust  
 To which the torture strength of their last pangs  
 Had crushed the iron crags; and over these  
 The jagged alligator, and the might  
 Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once 310  
 Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,  
 And weed-overgrown continents of earth,  
 Increased and multiplied like summer worms  
 On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe  
 Wrapped deluge round it like a cloak, and they 315  
 Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God  
 Whose throne was in a comet, passed and cried,  
 'Be not!' And like my words they were no more.

*The Earth.*

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!  
 The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness, 320  
 The vaporous exultation not to be confined!  
 Ha! ha! the animation of delight  
 Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,  
 And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

*The Moon.*

Brother mine, calm wanderer, 325  
 Happy globe of land and air,  
 Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,



Which penetrates my frozen frame,  
 And passes with the warmth of flame,  
 With love, and odour, and deep melody 330  
 Through me, through me!

*The Earth.*

Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,  
 My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains  
 Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.  
 The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses, 335  
 And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,  
 Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptred curse,  
 Who all our green and azure universe  
 Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction, sending  
 A solid cloud to rain hot thunderstones, 341  
 And splinter and knead down my children's bones,  
 All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blending,—

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,  
 Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn, 345  
 My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow, and fire;  
 My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom  
 Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,  
 Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire:

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up 350  
 By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup  
 Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all;  
 And from beneath, around, within, above,  
 Filling thy void annihilation, love  
 Burst in like light on caves cloven by the thunder-ball. 355

*The Moon.*

The snow upon my lifeless mountains  
 Is loosened into living fountains,  
 My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine:  
 A spirit from my heart bursts forth,  
 It clothes with unexpected birth 360  
 My cold bare bosom: Oh! it must be thine  
 On mine, on mine!

Gazing on thee I feel, I know  
 Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,  
 And living shapes upon my bosom move: 365  
 Music is in the sea and air,  
 Wingèd clouds soar here and there,

Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of:  
'Tis love, all love!

*The Earth.*

It interpenetrates my granite mass, 370  
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass  
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers;  
Upon the winds, among the clouds 'tis spread,  
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,  
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers. 375

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison  
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen  
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being:  
With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver  
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever, 380  
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,  
Which could distort to many a shape of error,  
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love;  
Which over all his kind, as the sun's heaven 385  
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even,  
Darting from starry depths radiance and life, doth move:

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is left,  
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft  
Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is poured;  
Then when it wanders home with rosy smile, 391  
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile  
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men! a chain of linkèd thought,  
Of love and might to be divided not, 395  
Compelling the elements with adamant stress;  
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,  
The unquiet republic of the maze  
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul, 400  
Whose nature is its own divine control,  
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;  
Familiar acts are beautiful through love;  
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove  
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be!

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights, 406  
And selfish cares, its trerabbling satellites,

A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,  
 Is as a tempest-wingèd ship, whose helm  
 Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm, 410  
 Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass  
 Of marble and of colour his dreams pass;  
 Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their children  
 wear;

Language is a perpetual Orphic song, 415  
 Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng  
 Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep  
 Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep  
 They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on! 420  
 The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;  
 And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,  
 Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none.

*The Moon.*

The shadow of white death has passed  
 From my path in heaven at last, 425  
 A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep;  
 And through my newly-woven bowers,  
 Wander happy paramours,  
 Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep  
 Thy vales more deep. 430

*The Earth.*

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold  
 A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,  
 And crystalline, till it becomes a wingèd mist,  
 And wanders up the vault of the blue day,  
 Outlives the moon, and on the sun's last ray 435  
 Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

*The Moon.*

Thou art folded, thou art lying  
 In the light which is undying  
 Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine;  
 All suns and constellations shower 440  
 On thee a light, a life, a power  
 Which doth array thy sphere; thou pourest thine  
 On mine, on mine!

*The Earth.*

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,  
 Which points into the heavens dreaming delight, 445

Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep;  
 As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,  
 Under the shadow of his beauty lying,  
 Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep.

*The Moon.*

As in the soft and sweet eclipse, 450  
 When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,  
 High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull;  
 So when thy shadow falls on me,  
 Then am I mute and still, by thee  
 Covered; of thy love, Orb most beautiful, 455  
 Full, oh, too full!

Thou art speeding round the sun  
 Brightest world of many a one;  
 Green and azure sphere which shinest 460  
 With a light which is divinest  
 Among all the lamps of Heaven  
 To whom life and light is given;  
 I, thy crystal paramour  
 Borne beside thee by a power  
 Like the polar Paradise, 465  
 Magnet-like of lovers' eyes;  
 I, a most enamoured maiden  
 Whose weak brain is overladen  
 With the pleasure of her love,  
 Maniac-like around thee move 470  
 Gazing, an insatiate bride,  
 On thy form from every side  
 Like a Mænad, round the cup  
 Which Agave lifted up  
 In the weird Cadmæan forest. 475  
 Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest  
 I must hurry, whirl and follow  
 Through the heavens wide and hollow,  
 Sheltered by the warm embrace  
 Of thy soul from hungry space, 480  
 Drinking from thy sense and sight  
 Beauty, majesty, and might,  
 As a lover or a chameleon  
 Grows like what it looks upon,  
 As a violet's gentle eye 485  
 Gazes on the azure sky  
 Until its hue grows like what it beholds,  
 As a gray and watery mist  
 Grows like solid amethyst

Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,  
 When the sunset sleeps  
 Upon its snow—

490

*The Earth.*

And the weak day weeps  
 That it should be so.  
 Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight  
 Falls on me like thy clear and tender light  
 Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,  
 Through isles for ever calm;  
 Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce  
 The caverns of my pride's deep universe,  
 Charming the tiger joy, whose tramlings fierce  
 Made wounds which need thy balm.

495

500

*Panthea.* I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,  
 A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,  
 Out of the stream of sound.

*Ione.* Ah me! sweet sister,  
 The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,  
 And you pretend to rise out of its wave,  
 Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew  
 Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

505

*Panthea.* Peace! peace! A mighty Power, which is as  
 darkness,  
 Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky  
 Is showered like night, and from within the air  
 Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up  
 Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,  
 Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,  
 Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

510

515

*Ione.* There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

*Panthea.* An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

*Demogorgon.*

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,  
 Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,  
 Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll  
 The love which paves thy path along the skies:

520

*The Earth.*

I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

*Demogorgon.*

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth  
 With wonder, as it gazes upon thee;

525

Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth  
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:

*The Moon.*

I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee!

*Demogorgon.*

Ye Kings of suns and stars, Dæmons and Gods,  
Aetherial Dominations, who possess 530  
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes  
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness:

*A Voice from above.*

Our great Republic hears, we are blest, and bless.

*Demogorgon.*

Ye happy Dead, whom beams of brightest verse  
Are clouds to hide, not colours to portray, 535  
Whether your nature is that universe  
Which once ye saw and suffered—

*A Voice from beneath.*

Or as they

Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

*Demogorgon.*

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes  
From man's high mind even to the central stone 540  
Of sullen lead; from heaven's star-fretted domes  
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:

*A confused Voice.*

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

*Demogorgon.*

Spirits, whose homes are flesh: ye beasts and birds,  
Ye worms, and fish; ye living leaves and buds; 545  
Lightning and wind; and ye untameable herds,  
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:—

*A Voice.*

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

*Demogorgon.*

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave;  
A dupe and a deceiver; a decay; 550  
A traveller from the cradle to the grave  
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

*All.*

Speak: thy strong words may never pass away.

*Demogorgon.*

This is the day, which down the void abysm  
 At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,  
 And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep: 556  
 Love, from its awful throne of patient power  
 In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour  
 O dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,  
 And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs 560  
 And folds over the world its healing wings.  
 Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,  
 These are the seals of that most firm assurance  
 Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;  
 And if, with infirm hand, Eternity, 565  
 Mother of many acts and hours, should free  
 The serpent that would clasp her with his length;  
 These are the spells by which to reassume  
 An empire o'er the disentangled doom.  
 To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite; 570  
 To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;  
 To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;  
 To love, and bear; to hope, till Hope creates  
 From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;  
 Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent; 575  
 This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
 Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;  
 This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

#### NOTE ON PROMETHEUS UNBOUND, BY MRS. SHELLEY

ON the 12th of March, 1818, Shelley quitted England, never to return. His principal motive was the hope that his health would be improved by a milder climate; he suffered very much during the winter previous to his emigration, and this decided his vacillating purpose. In December, 1817, he had written from Marlow to a friend, saying:

'My health has been materially worse. My feelings at intervals are of a deadly and torpid kind, or awakened to such a state of unnatural and keen excitement that, only to instance the organ of sight, I find the very blades of grass and the boughs of distant trees present themselves to me with microscopic distinctness. Towards evening I sink into a state of lethargy and inanimation, and often remain for hours on the sofa between sleep and waking, a prey to the most painful irritability of thought. Such, with little intermission, is my condition. The hours devoted to study are selected with vigilant caution from among these periods of endurance.

It is not for this that I think of travelling to Italy, even if I knew that Italy would relieve me. But I have experienced a decisive pulmonary attack; and although at present it has passed away without any considerable vestige of its existence, yet this symptom sufficiently shows the true nature of my disease to be consumptive. It is to my advantage that this malady is in its nature slow, and, if one is sufficiently alive to its advances, is susceptible of cure from a warm climate. In the event of its assuming any decided shape, *it would be my duty* to go to Italy without delay. It is not mere health, but life, that I should seek, and that not for my own sake—I feel I am capable of trampling on all such weakness; but for the sake of those to whom my life may be a source of happiness, utility, security, and honour, and to some of whom my death might be all that is the reverse.'

In almost every respect his journey to Italy was advantageous. He left behind friends to whom he was attached; but cares of a thousand kinds, many springing from his lavish generosity, crowded round him in his native country, and, except the society of one or two friends, he had no compensation. The climate caused him to consume half his existence in helpless suffering. His dearest pleasure, the free enjoyment of the scenes of Nature, was marred by the same circumstance.

He went direct to Italy, avoiding even Paris, and did not make any pause till he arrived at Milan. The first aspect of Italy enchanted Shelley; it seemed a garden of delight placed beneath a clearer and brighter heaven than any he had lived under before. He wrote long descriptive letters during the first year of his residence in Italy, which, as compositions, are the most beautiful in the world, and show how truly he appreciated and studied the wonders of Nature and Art in that divine land.

The poetical spirit within him speedily revived with all the power and with more than all the beauty of his first attempts. He meditated three subjects as the groundwork for lyrical dramas. One was the story of Tasso; of this a slight fragment of a song of Tasso remains. The other was one founded on the *Book of Job*, which he never abandoned in idea, but of which no trace remains among his papers. The third was the *Prometheus Unbound*. The Greek tragedians were now his most familiar companions in his wanderings, and the sublime majesty of Æschylus filled him with wonder and delight. The father of Greek tragedy does not possess the pathos of Sophocles, nor the variety and tenderness of Euripides; the interest on which he founds his dramas is often elevated above human vicissitudes into the mighty passions and throes of gods and demi-gods: such fascinated the abstract imagination of Shelley.

We spent a month at Milan, visiting the Lake of Como during that interval. Thence we passed in succession to Pisa, Leghorn, the Baths of Lucca, Venice, Este, Rome, Naples, and back again to Rome, whither we returned early in March, 1819. During all this time Shelley meditated the subject of his drama, and wrote portions of it. Other poems were composed during this interval, and while at the Bagni di Lucca he translated



Plato's *Symposium*. But, though he diversified his studies, his thoughts centred in the *Prometheus*. At last, when at Rome, during a bright and beautiful Spring, he gave up his whole time to the composition. The spot selected for his study was, as he mentions in his preface, the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. These are little known to the ordinary visitor at Rome. He describes them in a letter, with that poetry and delicacy and truth of description which render his narrated impressions of scenery of unequalled beauty and interest.

At first he completed the drama in three acts. It was not till several months after, when at Florence, that he conceived that a fourth act, a sort of hymn of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophecies with regard to Prometheus, ought to be added to complete the composition.

The prominent feature of Shelley's theory of the destiny of the human species was that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled. This also forms a portion of Christianity: God made earth and man perfect, till he, by his fall,

'Brought death into the world and all our woe.'

Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none. It is not my part in these Notes to notice the arguments that have been urged against this opinion, but to mention the fact that he entertained it, and was indeed attached to it with fervent enthusiasm. That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on was the image of One warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all—even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity; a victim full of fortitude and hope and spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of Good. Such he had depicted in his last poem, when he made Laon the enemy and the victim of tyrants. He now took a more idealized image of the same subject. He followed certain classical authorities in figuring Saturn as the good principle, Jupiter the usurping evil one, and Prometheus as the regenerator, who, unable to bring mankind back to primitive innocence, used knowledge as a weapon to defeat evil, by leading mankind, beyond the state wherein they are sinless through ignorance, to that in which they are virtuous through wisdom. Jupiter punished the temerity of the Titan by chaining him to a rock of Caucasus, and causing a vulture to devour his still-renewed heart. There was a prophecy afloat in heaven portending the fall of Jove, the secret of averting which was known only to Prometheus; and the god offered freedom from torture on condition of its being communicated to him. According to the mythological story, this referred to the offspring of Thetis, who was destined to be greater than his father. Prometheus at last bought pardon for his crime of enriching mankind with his gifts, by revealing the prophecy. Hercules killed the vulture, and set him free; and Thetis was married to Peleus, the father of Achilles.

Shelley adapted the catastrophe of this story to his peculiar views. The son greater than his father, born of the nuptials of Jupiter and Thetis, was to dethrone Evil, and bring back a happier reign than that of Saturn. Prometheus defies the power of his enemy, and endures centuries of torture; till the hour arrives when Jove, blind to the real event, but darkly guessing that some great good to himself will flow, espouses Thetis. At the moment, the Primal Power of the world drives him from his usurped throne, and Strength, in the person of Hercules, liberates Humanity, typified in Prometheus, from the tortures generated by evil done or suffered. Asia, one of the Oceanides, is the wife of Prometheus—she was, according to other mythological interpretations, the same as Venus and Nature. When the benefactor of mankind is liberated, Nature resumes the beauty of her prime, and is united to her husband, the emblem of the human race, in perfect and happy union. In the Fourth Act, the Poet gives further scope to his imagination, and idealizes the forms of creation—such as we know them, instead of such as they appeared to the Greeks. Maternal Earth, the mighty parent, is superseded by the Spirit of the Earth, the guide of our planet through the realms of sky; while his fair and weaker companion and attendant, the Spirit of the Moon, receives bliss from the annihilation of Evil in the superior sphere.

Shelley develops, more particularly in the lyrics of this drama, his abstruse and imaginative theories with regard to the Creation. It requires a mind as subtle and penetrating as his own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout the poem. They elude the ordinary reader by their abstraction and delicacy of distinction, but they are far from vague. It was his design to write prose metaphysical essays on the nature of Man, which would have served to explain much of what is obscure in his poetry; a few scattered fragments of observations and remarks alone remain. He considered these philosophical views of Mind and Nature to be instinct with the intensest spirit of poetry.

More popular poets clothe the ideal with familiar and sensible imagery. Shelley loved to idealize the real—to gift the mechanism of the material universe with a soul and a voice, and to bestow such also on the most delicate and abstract emotions and thoughts of the mind. Sophocles was his great master in this species of imagery.

I find in one of his manuscript books some remarks on a line in the *Ædipus Tyrannus*, which show at once the critical subtlety of Shelley's mind, and explain his apprehension of those 'minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us,' which he pronounces, in the letter quoted in the note to the *Revolt of Islam*, to comprehend all that is sublime in man.

'In the Greek Shakespeare, Sophocles, we find the image,

Πολλὰς δ' ὁδούς ἐλθόντα φρονιίδος πλάνοις:

a line of almost unfathomable depth of poetry; yet how simple are the images in which it is arrayed!

"Coming to many ways in the wanderings of careful thought."

If the words *ὁδοὺς* and *πλάνους* had not been used, the line might have been explained in a metaphorical instead of an absolute sense, as we say “ways and means,” and “wanderings” for error and confusion. But they meant literally paths or roads, such as we tread with our feet; and wanderings, such as a man makes when he loses himself in a desert, or roams from city to city—as Œdipus, the speaker of this verse, was destined to wander, blind and asking charity. What a picture does this line suggest of the mind as a wilderness of intricate paths, wide as the universe, which is here made its symbol; a world within a world which he who seeks some knowledge with respect to what he ought to do searches throughout, as he would search the external universe for some valued thing which was hidden from him upon its surface.’

In reading Shelley’s poetry, we often find similar verses, resembling, but not imitating the Greek in this species of imagery; for, though he adopted the style, he gifted it with that originality of form and colouring which sprung from his own genius.

In the *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley fulfils the promise quoted from a letter in the Note on the *Revolt of Islam*.<sup>1</sup> The tone of the composition is calmer and more majestic, the poetry more perfect as a whole, and the imagination displayed at once more pleasingly beautiful and more varied and daring. The description of the Hours, as they are seen in the cave of Demogorgon, is an instance of this—it fills the mind as the most charming picture—we long to see an artist at work to bring to our view the—

‘cars drawn by rainbow-wingèd steeds  
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands  
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.  
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,  
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:  
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink  
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,  
As if the thing they loved fled on before,  
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks  
Stream like a comet’s flashing hair: they all  
Sweep onward.’

Through the whole poem there reigns a sort of calm and holy spirit of love; it soothes the tortured, and is hope to the expectant, till the prophecy is fulfilled, and Love, untainted by any evil, becomes the law of the world.

England had been rendered a painful residence to Shelley, as much by the sort of persecution with which in those days all men of liberal opinions

<sup>1</sup> While correcting the proofsheets of that poem, it struck me that the poet had indulged in an exaggerated view of the evils of restored despotism; which, however injurious and degrading, were less openly sanguinary than the triumph of anarchy, such as it appeared in France at the close of the last century. But at this time a book, *Scenes of Spanish Life*, translated by Lieutenant Crawford from the German of Dr. Huber, of Rostock, fell into my hands. The account of the triumph of the priests and the serviles, after the French invasion of Spain in 1823, bears a strong and frightful resemblance to some of the descriptions of the massacre of the patriots in the *Revolt of Islam*.

were visited, and by the injustice he had lately endured in the Court of Chancery, as by the symptoms of disease which made him regard a visit to Italy as necessary to prolong his life. An exile, and strongly impressed with the feeling that the majority of his countrymen regarded him with sentiments of aversion such as his own heart could experience towards none, he sheltered himself from such disgusting and painful thoughts in the calm retreats of poetry, and built up a world of his own—with the more pleasure, since he hoped to induce some one or two to believe that the earth might become such, did mankind themselves consent. The charm of the Roman climate helped to clothe his thoughts in greater beauty than they had ever worn before. And, as he wandered among the ruins made one with Nature in their decay, or gazed on the Praxitelean shapes that throng the Vatican, the Capitol, and the palaces of Rome, his soul imbibed forms of loveliness which became a portion of itself. There are many passages in the *Prometheus* which show the intense delight he received from such studies, and give back the impression with a beauty of poetical description peculiarly his own. He felt this, as a poet must feel when he satisfies himself by the result of his labours; and he wrote from Rome, 'My *Prometheus Unbound* is just finished, and in a month or two I shall send it. It is a drama, with characters and mechanism of a kind yet unattempted; and I think the execution is better than any of my former attempts.'

I may mention, for the information of the more critical reader, that the verbal alterations in this edition of *Prometheus* are made from a list of errata written by Shelley himself.

## THE CENCI

### A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS

#### DEDICATION, TO LEIGH HUNT, Esq.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I inscribe with your name, from a distant country, and after an absence whose months have seemed years, this the latest of my literary efforts.

Those writings which I have hitherto published, have been little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just. I can also perceive in them the literary defects incidental to youth and impatience; they are dreams of what ought to be, or may be. The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of an instructor, and am content to paint, with such colours as my own heart furnishes, that which has been.

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent and brave; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet

himself more free from evil; one who knows better how to receive, and how to confer a benefit, though he must ever confer far more than he can receive; one of simpler, and, in the highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners I never knew: and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.

In that patient and irreconcilable enmity with domestic and political tyranny and imposture which the tenor of your life has illustrated, and which, had I health and talents, should illustrate mine, let us, comforting each other in our task, live and die.

All happiness attend you! Your affectionate friend,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

ROME, *May 29, 1819.*

## PREFACE

A MANUSCRIPT was communicated to me during my travels in Italy, which was copied from the archives of the Cenci Palace at Rome, and contains a detailed account of the horrors which ended in the extinction of one of the noblest and richest families of that city during the Pontificate of Clement VIII, in the year 1599. The story is, that an old man having spent his life in debauchery and wickedness, conceived at length an implacable hatred towards his children; which showed itself towards one daughter under the form of an incestuous passion, aggravated by every circumstance of cruelty and violence. This daughter, after long and vain attempts to escape from what she considered a perpetual contamination both of body and mind, at length plotted with her mother-in-law and brother to murder their common tyrant. The young maiden, who was urged to this tremendous deed by an impulse which overpowered its horror, was evidently a most gentle and amiable being, a creature formed to adorn and be admired, and thus violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstance and opinion. The deed was quickly discovered, and, in spite of the most earnest prayers made to the Pope by the highest persons in Rome, the criminals were put to death. The old man had during his life repeatedly bought his pardon from the Pope for capital crimes of the most enormous and unspeakable kind, at the price of a hundred thousand crowns; the death therefore of his victims can scarcely be accounted for by the love of justice. The Pope, among other motives for severity, probably felt that whoever killed the Count Cenci deprived his treasury of a certain and copious source of revenue.<sup>1</sup> Such a story, if told so as to present to the reader all the feelings of those who once acted it, their hopes and fears, their confidences and misgivings, their various interests, passions, and opinions, acting upon and with each other, yet all conspiring to one tremendous end, would be as

<sup>1</sup> The Papal Government formerly took the most extraordinary precautions against the publicity of facts which offer so tragical a demonstration of its own wickedness and weakness; so that the communication of the MS. had become, until very lately, a matter of some difficulty.

a light to make apparent some of the most dark and secret caverns of the human heart.

On my arrival at Rome I found that the story of the Cenci was a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathless interest; and that the feelings of the company never failed to incline to a romantic pity for the wrongs, and a passionate exculpation of the horrible deed to which they urged her, who has been mingled two centuries with the common dust. All ranks of people knew the outlines of this history, and participated in the overwhelming interest which it seems to have the magic of exciting in the human heart. I had a copy of Guido's picture of Beatrice which is preserved in the Colonna Palace, and my servant instantly recognized it as the portrait of *La Cenci*.

This national and universal interest which the story produces and has produced for two centuries and among all ranks of people in a great City, where the imagination is kept for ever active and awake, first suggested to me the conception of its fitness for a dramatic purpose. In fact it is a tragedy which has already received, from its capacity of awakening and sustaining the sympathy of men, approbation and success. Nothing remained as I imagined, but to clothe it to the apprehensions of my countrymen in such language and action as would bring it home to their hearts. The deepest and the sublimest tragic compositions, *King Lear* and the two plays in which the tale of *Œdipus* is told, were stories which already existed in tradition, as matters of popular belief and interest, before Shakspeare and Sophocles made them familiar to the sympathy of all succeeding generations of mankind.

This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous: anything like a dry exhibition of it on the stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal, and diminish the actual horror of the events, so that the pleasure which arises from the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes may mitigate the pain of the contemplation of the moral deformity from which they spring. There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose. The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind. If dogmas can do more, it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them. Undoubtedly, no person can be truly dishonoured by the act of another; and the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love. Revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better; but she would never have been a tragic character: the few whom such an exhibition would have interested, could never have been sufficiently interested for a dramatic purpose, from the want of finding sympathy in their interest.

among the mass who surround them. It is in the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered consists.

I have endeavoured as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conceptions of right or wrong, false or true: thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind. They are represented as Catholics, and as Catholics deeply tinged with religion. To a Protestant apprehension there will appear something unnatural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and men which pervade the tragedy of the Cenci. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in Protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion coexists, as it were, in the mind of an Italian Catholic, with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and without any shock to established faith, confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge; never a check. Cenci himself built a chapel in the court of his Palace, and dedicated it to St. Thomas the Apostle, and established masses for the peace of his soul. Thus in the first scene of the fourth act Lucretia's design in exposing herself to the consequences of an expostulation with Cenci after having administered the opiate, was to induce him by a feigned tale to confess himself before death; this being esteemed by Catholics as essential to salvation; and she only relinquishes her purpose when she perceives that her perseverance would expose Beatrice to new outrages.

I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature.<sup>1</sup>

In a dramatic composition the imagery and the passion should inter-

<sup>1</sup> An idea in this speech was suggested by a most sublime passage in *El Purgatorio de San Patricio* of Calderon; the only plagiarism which I have intentionally committed in the whole piece.

penetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects, I have written more carelessly; that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men, and that our great ancestors the ancient English poets are the writers, a study of whom might incite us to do that for our own age which they have done for theirs. But it must be the real language of men in general and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong. So much for what I have attempted; I need not be assured that success is a very different matter; particularly for one whose attention has but newly been awakened to the study of dramatic literature.

I endeavoured whilst at Rome to observe such monuments of this story as might be accessible to a stranger. The portrait of Beatrice at the Colonna Palace is admirable as a work of art: it was taken by Guido during her confinement in prison. But it is most interesting as a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of Nature. There is a fixed and pale composure upon the features: she seems sad and stricken down in spirit, yet the despair thus expressed is lightened by the patience of gentleness. Her head is bound with folds of white drapery from which the yellow strings of her golden hair escape, and fall about her neck. The moulding of her face is exquisitely delicate; the eyebrows are distinct and arched: the lips have that permanent meaning of imagination and sensibility which suffering has not repressed and which it seems as if death scarcely could extinguish. Her forehead is large and clear; her eyes, which we are told were remarkable for their vivacity, are swollen with weeping and lustreless, but beautifully tender and serene. In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which, united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow, are inexpressibly pathetic. Beatrice Cenci appears to have been one of those rare persons in whom energy and gentleness dwell together without destroying one another: her nature was simple and profound. The crimes and miseries in which she was an actor and a sufferer are as the mask and the mantle in which circumstances clothed her for her impersonation on the scene of the world.

The Cenci Palace is of great extent; and though in part modernized, there yet remains a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture in the same state as during the dreadful scenes which are the subject of this tragedy. The Palace is situated in an obscure corner of Rome, near the quarter of the Jews, and from the upper windows you see the immense ruins of Mount Palatine half hidden under their profuse overgrowth of



trees. There is a court in one part of the Palace (perhaps that in which Cenci built the Chapel to St. Thomas), supported by granite columns and adorned with antique friezes of fine workmanship, and built up, according to the ancient Italian fashion, with balcony over balcony of open-work. One of the gates of the Palace formed of immense stones and leading through a passage, dark and lofty and opening into gloomy subterranean chambers, struck me particularly.

Of the Castle of Petrella, I could obtain no further information than that which is to be found in the manuscript.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

|                             |                                    |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| COUNT FRANCESCO CENCI.      | SAVELLA, <i>the Pope's Legate.</i> |
| GIACOMO, } <i>his Sons.</i> | OLIMPIO, } <i>Assassins.</i>       |
| BERNARDO, }                 | MARZIO, }                          |
| CARDINAL CAMILLO.           | ANDREA, <i>Servant to Cenci.</i>   |
| ORSINO, <i>a Prelate.</i>   | Nobles, Judges, Guards, Servants.  |

LUCRETIA, *Wife of CENCI, and Step-mother of his children.*

BEATRICE, *his Daughter.*

The SCENE lies principally in Rome, but changes during the Fourth Act to Petrella, a castle among the Apulian Apennines.

TIME. During the Pontificate of Clement VIII.

### ACT I

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.*

*Enter COUNT CENCI, and CARDINAL CAMILLO.*

*Camillo.* That matter of the murder is hushed up  
 If you consent to yield his Holiness  
 Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate.—  
 It needed all my interest in the conclave  
 To bend him to this point: he said that you 5  
 Bought perilous impunity with your gold;  
 That crimes like yours if once or twice compounded  
 Enriched the Church, and respited from hell  
 An erring soul which might repent and live:—  
 But that the glory and the interest 10  
 Of the high throne he fills, little consist  
 With making it a daily mart of guilt  
 As manifold and hideous as the deeds

Which you scarce hide from men's revolted eyes.

*Cenci.* The third of my possessions—let it go! 15

Ay, I once heard the nephew of the Pope

Had sent his architect to view the ground,

Meaning to build a villa on my vines

The next time I compounded with his uncle:

I little thought he should outwit me so! 20

Henceforth no witness—not the lamp—shall see

That which the vassal threatened to divulge

Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward.

The deed he saw could not have rated higher

Than his most worthless life:—it angers me! 25

Respited me from Hell!—So may the Devil

Respite their souls from Heaven. No doubt Pope Clement,

And his most charitable nephews, pray

That the Apostle Peter and the Saints

Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy 30

Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length of days

Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards

Of their revenue.—But much yet remains

To which they show no title.

*Camillo.* Oh, Count Cenci!

So much that thou mightst honourably live 35

And reconcile thyself with thine own heart

And with thy God, and with the offended world.

How hideously look deeds of lust and blood

Through those snow white and venerable hairs!—

Your children should be sitting round you now, 40

But that you fear to read upon their looks

The shame and misery you have written there.

Where is your wife? Where is your gentle daughter?

Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things else

Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you. 45

Why is she barred from all society

But her own strange and uncomplaining wrongs?

Talk with me, Count,—you know I mean you well.

I stood beside your dark and fiery youth

Watching its bold and bad career, as men 50

Watch meteors, but it vanished not—I marked

Your desperate and remorseless manhood; now

Do I behold you in dishonoured age

Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes.

Yet I have ever hoped you would amend, 55

And in that hope have saved your life three times.

*Cenci.* For which Aldobrandino owes you now

My fief beyond the Pincian.—Cardinal,

One thing, I pray you, recollect henceforth,

And so we shall converse with less restraint.  
 A man you knew spoke of my wife and daughter—  
 He was accustomed to frequent my house;  
 So the next day *his* wife and daughter came  
 And asked if I had seen him; and I smiled:  
 I think they never saw him any more.

60

65

*Camillo.* Thou execrable man, beware!—

*Cenci.*

Of thee?

Nay this is idle:—We should know each other.  
 As to my character for what men call crime  
 Seeing I please my senses as I list,  
 And vindicate that right with force or guile,  
 It is a public matter, and I care not  
 If I discuss it with you. I may speak  
 Alike to you and my own conscious heart—  
 For you give out that you have half reformed me,  
 Therefore strong vanity will keep you silent  
 If fear should not; both will, I do not doubt.  
 All men delight in sensual luxury,  
 All men enjoy revenge; and most exult  
 Over the tortures they can never feel—  
 Flattering their secret peace with others' pain.  
 But I delight in nothing else. I love  
 The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,  
 When this shall be another's, and that mine.  
 And I have no remorse and little fear,  
 Which are, I think, the checks of other men.  
 This mood has grown upon me, until now  
 Any design my captious fancy makes  
 The picture of its wish, and it forms none  
 But such as men like you would start to know,  
 Is as my natural food and rest debarred  
 Until it be accomplished.

70

75

80

85

90

*Camillo.*

Art thou not

Most miserable?

*Cenci.*

Why, miserable?—

No.—I am what your theologians call  
 Hardened;—which they must be in impudence,  
 So to revile a man's peculiar taste.  
 True, I was happier than I am, while yet  
 Manhood remained to act the thing I thought;  
 While lust was sweeter than revenge; and now  
 Invention palls:—Ay, we must all grow old—  
 And but that there yet remains a deed to act  
 Whose horror might make sharp an appetite  
 Duller than mine—I'd do—I know not what.  
 When I was young I thought of nothing else

95

100

But pleasure; and I fed on honey sweets:  
 Men, by St. Thomas! cannot live like bees, 105  
 And I grew tired:—yet, till I killed a foe,  
 And heard his groans, and heard his children's groans,  
 Knew I not what delight was else on earth,  
 Which now delights me little. I the rather  
 Look on such pangs as terror ill conceals, 110  
 The dry fixed eyeball; the pale quivering lip,  
 Which tell me that the spirit weeps within  
 Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ.  
 I rarely kill the body, which preserves,  
 Like a strong prison, the soul within my power, 115  
 Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear  
 For hourly pain.

*Camillo.* Hell's most abandoned fiend  
 Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,  
 Speak to his heart as now you speak to me;  
 I thank my God that I believe you not. 120

*Enter ANDREA.*

*Andrea.* My Lord, a gentleman from Salamanca  
 Would speak with you.

*Cenci.* Bid him attend me in  
 The grand saloon. [Exit ANDREA.

*Camillo.* Farewell; and I will pray  
 Almighty God that thy false, impious words  
 Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee. [Exit CAMILLO. 126

*Cenci.* The third of my possessions! I must use 126  
 Close husbandry, or gold, the old man's sword,  
 Falls from my withered hand. But yesterday  
 There came an order from the Pope to make  
 Fourfold provision for my cursèd sons; 130  
 Whom I had sent from Rome to Salamanca,  
 Hoping some accident might cut them off;  
 And meaning if I could to starve them there.  
 I pray thee, God, send some quick death upon them!  
 Bernardo and my wife could not be worse? 135  
 If dead and damned:—then, as to Beatrice—

[Looking around him suspiciously.  
 I think they cannot hear me at that door;  
 What if they should? And yet I need not speak  
 Though the heart triumphs with itself in words.  
 O, thou most silent air, that shalt not hear 140  
 What now I think! Thou, pavement, which I tread  
 Towards her chamber,—let your echoes talk  
 Of my imperious step scorning surprise,  
 But not of my intent!—Andrea!

*Enter ANDREA.**Andrea.*

My lord?

*Cenci.* Bid Beatrice attend me in her chamber  
This evening:—no, at midnight and alone.

145

[*Exeunt.*]SCENE II.—*A Garden of the Cenci Palace. Enter BEATRICE and ORSINO.  
as in conversation.**Beatrice.* Pervert not truth,*Orsino.* You remember where we held  
That conversation;—nay, we see the spot  
Even from this cypress;—two long years are past  
Since, on an April midnight, underneath  
The moonlight ruins of mount Palatine,  
I did confess to you my secret mind.

5

*Orsino.* You said you loved me then.*Beatrice.* You are a Priest,  
Speak to me not of love.*Orsino.* I may obtain  
The dispensation of the Pope to marry.

10

Because I am a Priest do you believe  
Your image, as the hunter some struck deer,  
Follows me not whether I wake or sleep?*Beatrice.* As I have said, speak to me not of love.

Had you a dispensation I have not;

15

Nor will I leave this home of misery

Whilst my poor Bernard, and that gentle lady  
To whom I owe my life, and these virtuous thoughts,  
Must suffer what I still have strength to share.

Alas, Orsino! All the love that once

20

I felt for you, is turned to bitter pain.)

Ours was a youthful contract, which you first  
Broke, by assuming vows no Pope will loose.

And thus I love you still, but holily,

Even as a sister or a spirit might;

25

And so I swear a cold fidelity.

And it is well perhaps we shall not marry.

You have a sly, equivocating vein

That suits me not.—Ah, wretched that I am!

Where shall I turn? Even now you look on me

30

As you were not my friend, and as if you

Discovered that I thought so, with false smiles

Making my true suspicion seem your wrong.

Ah, no! forgive me; sorrow makes me seem

Sternier than else my nature might have been;

35

I have a weight of melancholy thoughts,

And they forebode,—but what can they forebode

Worse than I now endure?

*Orsino.* All will be well.  
 Is the petition yet prepared? You know  
 My zeal for all you wish, sweet Beatrice; 40  
 Doubt not but I will use my utmost skill  
 So that the Pope attend to your complaint.

*Beatrice.* Your zeal for all I wish;—Ah me, you are cold!  
 Your utmost skill . . . speak but one word . . . (*aside*) Alas!  
 Weak and deserted creature that I am, 45  
 Here I stand bickering with my only friend! [*To ORSINO.*  
 This night my father gives a sumptuous feast,  
 Orsino; he has heard some happy news  
 From Salamanca, from my brothers there,  
 And with this outward show of love he mocks 50  
 His inward hate. 'Tis bold hypocrisy,  
 For he would gladlier celebrate their deaths,  
 Which I have heard him pray for on his knees:  
 Great God! that such a father should be mine!  
 But there is mighty preparation made, 55  
 And all our kin, the Cenci, will be there,  
 And all the chief nobility of Rome.  
 And he has bidden me and my pale Mother  
 Attire ourselves in festival array.  
 Poor lady! She expects some happy change 60  
 In his dark spirit from this act; I none.  
 At supper I will give you the petition:  
 Till when—farewell.

*Orsino.* Farewell. (*Exit BEATRICE.*) I know the Pope  
 Will ne'er absolve me from my priestly vow  
 But by absolving me from the revenue 65  
 Of many a wealthy see; and, Beatrice,  
 I think to win thee at an easier rate.  
 Nor shall he read her eloquent petition:  
 He might bestow her on some poor relation  
 Of his sixth cousin, as he did her sister, 70  
 And I should be debarred from all access.  
 Then as to what she suffers from her father,  
 In all this there is much exaggeration:—  
 Old men are testy and will have their way;  
 A man may stab his enemy, or his vassal, 75  
 And live a free life as to wine or women,  
 And with a peevish temper may return  
 To a dull home, and rate his wife and children;  
 Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny.  
 I shall be well content if on my conscience 80  
 There rest no heavier sin than what they suffer  
 From the devices of my love—a net  
 From which she shall escape not. Yet I fear

Her subtle mind, her awe-inspiring gaze,  
 Whose beams anatomize me nerve by nerve 85  
 And lay me bare, and make me blush to see  
 My hidden thoughts.—Ah, no! A friendless girl  
 Who clings to me, as to her only hope:—  
 I were a fool, not less than if a panther  
 Were panic-stricken by the antelope's eye, 90  
 If she escape me. [Exit.

SCENE III.—*A Magnificent Hall in the Cenci Palace. A Banquet. Enter*  
 CENCI, LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, ORSINO, CAMILLO, NOBLES.

*Cenci.* Welcome, my friends and kinsmen; welcome ye,  
 Princes and Cardinals, pillars of the church,  
 Whose presence honours our festivity.  
 I have too long lived like an anchorite,  
 And in my absence from your merry meetings 5  
 An evil word is gone abroad of me;  
 But I do hope that you, my noble friends,  
 When you have shared the entertainment here,  
 And heard the pious cause for which 'tis given,  
 And we have pledged a health or two together, 10  
 Will think me flesh and blood as well as you;  
 Sinful indeed, for Adam made all so,  
 But tender-hearted, meek and pitiful.

*First Guest.* In truth, my Lord, you seem too light of heart,  
 Too sprightly and companionable a man, 15  
 To act the deeds that rumour pins on you.  
 (To his Companion.) I never saw such blithe and open cheer  
 In any eye!

*Second Guest.* Some most desired event,  
 In which we all demand a common joy,  
 Has brought us hither; let us hear it, Count. 20

*Cenci.* It is indeed a most desired event.  
 If, when a parent from a parent's heart  
 Lifts from this earth to the great Father of all  
 A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep,  
 And when he rises up from dreaming it; 25  
 One supplication, one desire, one hope,  
 That he would grant a wish for his two sons,  
 Even all that he demands in their regard—  
 And suddenly beyond his dearest hope  
 It is accomplished, he should then rejoice, 30  
 And call his friends and kinsmen to a feast,  
 And task their love to grace his merriment,—  
 Then honour me thus far—for I am he.

*Beatrice (to LUCRETIA).* Great God! How horrible! Some  
 dreadful ill

Must have befallen my brothers.

*Lucretia.*

Fear not, Child,

35

He speaks too frankly.

*Beatrice.*

Ah! My blood runs cold.

I fear that wicked laughter round his eye,  
Which wrinkles up the skin even to the hair.

*Cenci.* Here are the letters brought from Salamanca;

Beatrice, read them to your mother. God!

40

I thank thee! In one night didst thou perform,

By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought.

My disobedient and rebellious sons

Are dead!—Why, dead!—What means this change of cheer?

45

You hear me not, I tell you they are dead;

And they will need no food or raiment more:

The tapers that did light them the dark way

Are their last cost. The Pope, I think, will not

Expect I should maintain them in their coffins,

Rejoice with me—my heart is wondrous glad.

50

[*LUCRETIA sinks, half fainting; BEATRICE supports her.*

*Beatrice.* It is not true!—Dear lady, pray look up.

Had it been true, there is a God in Heaven,

He would not live to boast of such a boon.

Unnatural man, thou knowest that it is false.

*Cenci.* Ay, as the word of God; whom here I call

55

To witness that I speak the sober truth;—

And whose most favouring Providence was shown

Even in the manner of their deaths. For Rocco

Was kneeling at the mass, with sixteen others,

When the church fell and crushed him to a mummy,

60

The rest escaped unhurt. Cristofano

Was stabbed in error by a jealous man.

Whilst she he loved was sleeping with his rival;

All in the self-same hour of the same night;

Which shows that Heaven has special care of me.

65

I beg those friends who love me, that they mark

The day a feast upon their calendars.

It was the twenty-seventh of December:

Ay, read the letters if you doubt my oath.

[*The Assembly appears confused; several of the guests rise.*

*First Guest.* Oh, horrible! I will depart—

*Second Guest.*

And I.—

*Third Guest.*

No, stay! 70

I do believe it is some jest; though faith!

'Tis mocking us somewhat too solemnly.

I think his son has married the Infanta,

Or found a mine of gold in El Dorado;

'Tis but to season some such news; stay, stay!

75



I see 'tis only raillery by his smile.

*Cenci (filling a bowl of wine, and lifting it up).* Oh, thou  
bright wine whose purple splendour leaps

And bubbles gaily in this golden bowl  
Under the 'amplight, as my spirits do,  
To hear the death of my accursèd sons! 80

Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood,  
Then would I taste thee like a sacrament,

And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell,  
Who, if a father's curses, as men say, 85

Climb with swift wings after their children's souls,  
And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,

Now triumphs in my triumph!—But thou art  
Superfluous; I have drunken deep of joy,

And I will taste no other wine to-night.  
Here, Andrea! Bear the bowl around. 90

*A Guest (rising).* Thou wretch!  
Will none among this noble company

Check the abandoned villain?  
*Camillo.* For God's sake

Let me dismiss the guests! You are insane,  
Some ill will come of this.

*Second Guest.* Seize, silence him!  
*First Guest.* I will!

*Third Guest.* And I!  
*Cenci (addressing those who rise with a threatening gesture).*

Who moves? Who speaks?  
(turning to the Company)

'tis nothing, 95

Enjoy yourselves.—Beware! For my revenge  
Is as the sealed commission of a king

That kills, and none dare name the murderer.  
[*The Banquet is broken up; several of the Guests are departing.*]

*Beatrice.* I do entreat you, go not, noble guests;  
What, although tyranny and impious hate 100

Stand sheltered by a father's hoary hair?  
What, if 'tis he who clothed us in these limbs

Who tortures them, and triumphs? What, if we,  
The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh,

His children and his wife, whom he is bound 105  
To love and shelter? Shall we therefore find

No refuge in this merciless wide world?  
O think what deep wrongs must have blotted out

First love, then reverence in a child's prone mind,  
Till it thus vanquish shame and fear! O think! 110

I have borne much, and kissed the sacred hand

Which crushed us to the earth, and thought its stroke  
 Was perhaps some paternal chastisement!  
 Have excused much, doubted; and when no doubt  
 Remained, have sought by patience, love, and tears 115  
 To soften him, and when this could not be  
 I have knelt down through the long sleepless nights  
 And lifted up to God, the Father of all,  
 Passionate prayers: and when these were not heard  
 I have still borne,—until I meet you here, 120  
 Princes and kinsmen, at this hideous feast  
 Given at my brothers' deaths. Two yet remain,  
 His wife remains and I, whom if ye save not,  
 Ye may soon share such merriment again  
 As fathers make over their children's graves. 125  
 O Prince Colonna, thou art rear kinsman,  
 Cardinal, thou art the Pope's chamberlain,  
 Camillo, thou art chief justiciary,  
 Take us away!

*Cenci.* (*He has been conversing with CAMILLO during the first  
 part of BEATRICE's speech; he hears the conclusion, and  
 now advances.*) I hope my good friends here  
 Will think of their own daughters—or perhaps 130  
 Of their own throats—before they lend an ear  
 To this wild girl.

*Beatrice* (*not noticing the words of Cenci*). Dare no one look  
 on me?

None answer? Can one tyrant overbear  
 The sense of many best and wisest men?  
 Or is it that I sue not in some form 135  
 Of scrupulous law, that ye deny my suit?  
 O God! That I were buried with my brothers!  
 And that the flowers of this departed spring  
 Were fading on my grave! And that my father  
 Were celebrating now one feast for all! 140

*Camillo.* A bitter wish for one so young and gentle;  
 Can we do nothing?

*Colonna.* Nothing that I see.  
 Count Cenci were a dangerous enemy:  
 Yet I would second any one.

*A Cardinal.* And I.

*Cenci.* Retire to your chamber insolent girl! 145

*Beatrice.* Retire thou, impious man! Ay, hide thyself  
 Where never eye can look upon thee more!  
 Wouldst thou have honour and obedience  
 Who art a torturer? Father, never dream  
 Though thou mayst overbear this company, 150  
 But ill must come of ill.—Frown not on me!

Haste, hide thyself, lest with avenging looks  
 My brothers' ghosts should hunt thee from thy seat!  
 Cover thy face from every living eye,  
 And start if thou but hear a human step: 155  
 Seek out some dark and silent corner, there,  
 Bow thy white head before offended God,  
 And we will kneel around, and fervently  
 Pray that he pity both ourselves and thee.

*Cenci.* My friends, I do lament this insane girl 160  
 Has spoilt the mirth of our festivity.

Good night, farewell; I will not make you longer  
 Spectators of our dull domestic quarrels.

Another time.— [Exeunt all but CENCI and BEATRICE.

My brain is swimming round;  
 Give me a bowl of wine! [To BEATRICE. 165

Thou painted viper!  
 Beast that thou art! Fair and yet terrible!  
 I know a charm shall make thee meek and tame,  
 Now get thee from my sight! [Exit BEATRICE.

Here, Andrea,  
 Fill up this goblet with Greek wine. I said  
 I would not drink this evening; but I must; 170  
 For, strange to say, I feel my spirits fail  
 With thinking what I have decreed to do.—

[Drinking the wine.

Be thou the resolution of quick youth  
 Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern,  
 And age's firm, cold, subtle villainy; 175  
 As if thou wert indeed my children's blood  
 Which I did thirst to drink! The charm works well;  
 It must be done; it shall be done, I swear! [Exit.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

## ACT II

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace. Enter LUCRETIA and BERNARDO.*

*Lucretia.* Weep not, my gentle boy; he struck but me  
 Who have borne deeper wrongs. In truth, if he  
 Had killed me, he had done a kinder deed.  
 O God, Almighty, do Thou look upon us,  
 We have no other friend but only Thee! 5  
 Yet weep not; though I love you as my own,  
 I am not your true mother.

*Bernardo.* O more, more,  
 Than ever mother was to any child,  
 That have you been to me! Had he not been

My father, do you think that I should weep! 10

*Lucretia.* Alas! Poor boy, what else couldst thou have done?

*Enter BEATRICE.*

*Beatrice (in a hurried voice).* Did he pass this way? Have you seen him, brother?

Ah, no! that is his step upon the stairs;  
'Tis nearer now; his hand is on the door;  
Mother, if I to thee have ever been 15

A duteous child, now save me! Thou, great God,  
Whose image upon earth a father is,  
Dost Thou indeed abandon me? He comes;  
The door is opening now; I see his face;  
He frowns on others, but he smiles on me, 20  
Even as he did after the feast last night.

*Enter a Servant.*

Almighty God, how merciful Thou art!  
'Tis but Orsino's servant.—Well, what news?

*Servant.* My master bids me say, the Holy Father  
Has sent back your petition thus unopened. [*Giving a paper.* 26  
And he demands at what hour 'twere secure  
To visit you again?

*Lucretia.* At the Ave Mary. [*Exit Servant.*  
So, daughter, our last hope has failed; Ah me!  
How pale you look; you tremble, and you stand  
Wrapped in some fixed and fearful meditation, 36  
As if one thought were over strong for you:  
Your eyes have a chill glare; O, dearest child!  
Are you gone mad? If not, pray speak to me.

*Beatrice.* You see I am not mad: I speak to you.

*Lucretia.* You talked of something that your father did 35  
After that dreadful feast? Could it be worse  
Than when he smiled, and cried, 'My sons are dead!'  
And every one looked in his neighbour's face  
To see if others were as white as he?

At the first word he spoke I felt the blood 40  
Rush to my heart, and fell into a trance;  
And when it passed I sat all weak and wild;  
Whilst you alone stood up, and with strong words  
Checked his unnatural pride; and I could see  
The devil was rebuked that lives in him. 45

Until this hour thus have you ever stood  
Between us and your father's moody wrath  
Like a protecting presence: your firm mind  
Has been our only refuge and defence:  
What can have thus subdued it? What can now 50  
Have given you that cold melancholy look,  
Succeeding to your unaccustomed fear?

*Beatrice.* What is it that you say? I was just thinking  
'Twere better not to struggle any more.

Men, like my father, have been dark and bloody, 55

Yet never—Oh! Before worse comes of it

'Twere wise to die: it ends in that at last.

*Lucretia.* Oh, talk not so, dear child! Tell me at once  
What did your father do or say to you?

He stayed not after that accursèd feast 60

One moment in your chamber.—Speak to me.

*Bernardo.* Oh, sister, sister, prithee, speak to us!

*Beatrice* (*speaking very slowly with a forced calmness*). It was  
one word, Mother, one little word;

One look, one smile. (*Wildly.*) Oh! He has trampled me

Under his feet, and made the blood stream down 65

My pallid cheeks. And he has given us all

Ditch-water, and the fever-stricken flesh

Of buffaloes, and bade us eat or starve,

And we have eaten.—He has made me look

On my beloved Bernardo, when the rust 70

Of heavy chains has gangrened his sweet limbs,

And I have never yet despaired—but now!

What could I say? [*Recovering herself.*]

Ah, no! 'tis nothing new.

The sufferings we all share have made me wild:

He only struck and cursed me as he passed; 75

He said, he looked, he did;—nothing at all

Beyond his wont, yet it disordered me.

Alas! I am forgetful of my duty,

I should preserve my senses for your sake.

*Lucretia.* Nay, Beatrice; have courage, my sweet girl, 80

It any one despairs it should be I

Who loved him once, and now must live with him

Till God in pity call for him or me.

For you may, like your sister, find some husband,

And smile, years hence, with children round your knees; 85

Whilst I, then dead, and all this hideous coil

Shall be remembered only as a dream.

*Beatrice.* Talk not to me, dear lady, of a husband.

Did you not nurse me when my mother died?

Did you not shield me and that dearest boy? 90

And had we any other friend but you

In infancy, with gentle words and looks,

To win our father not to murder us?

And shall I now desert you? May the ghost

Of my dead Mother plead against my soul 95

If I abandon her who filled the place

She left, with more, even, than a mother's love!

*Bernardo.* And I am of my sister's mind. Indeed  
I would not leave you in this wretchedness,  
Even though the Pope should make me free to live 100  
In some blithe place, like others of my age,  
With sports, and delicate food, and the fresh air.  
Oh, never think that I will leave you, Mother!

*Lucretia.* My dear, dear children!

*Enter CENCI, suddenly.*

*Cenci.* What, Beatrice here!  
Come hither! [*She shrinks back, and covers her face.*]

Nay, hide not your face, 'tis fair; 105  
Look up! Why, yesternight you dared to look  
With disobedient insolence upon me,  
Bending a stern and an inquiring brow  
On what I meant; whilst I then sought to hide  
That which I came to tell you—but in vain. 110

*Beatrice (wildly, staggering towards the door).* O that the earth  
would gape! Hide me, O God!

*Cenci.* Then it was I whose inarticulate words  
Fell from my lips, and who with tottering steps  
Fled from your presence, as you now from mine.  
Stay, I command you—from this day and hour 115  
Never again, I think, with fearless eye,  
And brow superior, and unaltered cheek,  
And that lip made for tenderness or scorn,  
Shalt thou strike dumb the meanest of mankind;  
Me least of all. Now get thee to thy chamber! 120  
(Thou too, loathed image of thy cursèd mother,

[*To BERNARDO.*]

Thy milky, meek face makes me sick with hate!

[*Exeunt BEATRICE and BERNARDO.*]

(*Aside.*) So much has passed between us as must make  
Me bold, her fearful.—'Tis an awful thing  
To touch such mischief as I now conceive: 125  
So men sit shivering on the dewy bank,  
And try the chill stream with their feet; once in . . .  
How the delighted spirit pants for joy!

*Lucretia (advancing 'imidly towards him).* O husband! Pray  
forgive poor Beatrice.  
She meant not any ill.

*Cenci.* Nor you perhaps? 130  
Nor that young imp, whom you have taught by rote  
Parricide with his alphabet? Nor Giacomo?  
Nor those two most unnatural sons, who stirred  
Enmity up against me with the Pope?  
Whom in one night merciful God cut off; 135  
Innocent lambs! They thought not any ill.

You were not here conspiring? You said nothing  
 Of how I might be dungeoned as a madman;  
 Or be condemned to death for some offence,  
 And you would be the witnesses?—This failing, 140  
 How just it were to hire assassins, or  
 Put sudden poison in my evening drink?  
 Or smother me when overcome by wine?  
 Seeing we had no other judge but God,  
 And He had sentenced me, and there were none 145  
 But you to be the executioners  
 Of His decree enregistered in Heaven?  
 Oh, no! You said not this?

*Lucretia.* So help me God,  
 I never thought the things you charge me with!  
*Cenci.* If you dare speak that wicked lie again 150  
 I'll kill you. What! It was not by your counsel  
 That Beatrice disturbed the feast last night?  
 You did not hope to stir some enemies  
 Against me, and escape, and laugh to scorn  
 What every nerve of you now trembles at? 155  
 You judged that men were bolder than they are;  
 Few dare to stand between their grave and me.

*Lucretia.* Look not so dreadfully! By my salvation  
 I knew not aught that Beatrice designed;  
 Nor do I think she designed any thing 160  
 Until she heard you talk of her dead brothers.

*Cenci.* Blaspheming liar! You are damned for this!  
 But I will take you where you may persuade  
 The stones you tread on to deliver you:  
 For men shall there be none but those who dare 165  
 All things—not question that which I command.  
 On Wednesday next I shall set out: you know  
 That savage rock, the Castle of Petrella:  
 'Tis safely walled, and moated round about:  
 Its dungeons underground, and its thick towers 170  
 Never told tales; though they have heard and seen  
 What might make dumb things speak.—Why do you linger?  
 Make speediest preparation for the journey! [*Exit LUCRETIA*]  
 The all-beholding sun yet shines; I hear  
 A busy stir of men about the streets; 175  
 I see the bright sky through the window panes:  
 It is a garish, broad, and peering day;  
 Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears,  
 And every little corner, nook, and hole  
 Is penetrated with the insolent light. 180  
 Come darkness! Yet, what is the day to me?  
 And wherefore should I wish for night, who do

A deed which shall confound both night and day?  
 'Tis she shall grope through a bewildering mist  
 Of horror: if there be a sun in heaven 185  
 She shall not dare to look upon its beams;  
 Nor feel its warmth. Let her then wish for night;  
 The act I think shall soon extinguish all  
 For me: I bear a darker deadlier gloom  
 Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air, 190  
 Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud,  
 In which I walk secure and unbeheld  
 Towards my purpose.—Would that it were done! [Exit.

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in the Vatican. Enter CAMILLO and GIACOMO, in conversation.*

*Camillo.* There is an obsolete and doubtful law  
 By which you might obtain a bare provision  
 Of food and clothing—

*Giacomo.* Nothing more? Alas!  
 Bare must be the provision which strict law  
 Awards, and agèd, sullen avarice pays. 5  
 Why did my father not apprentice me  
 To some mechanic trade? I should have then  
 Been trained in no highborn necessities  
 Which I could meet not by my daily toil.  
 The eldest son of a rich nobleman 10  
 Is heir to all his incapacities;  
 He has wide wants, and narrow powers. If you,  
 Cardinal Camillo, were reduced at once  
 From thrice-driven beds of down, and delicate food,  
 An hundred servants, and six palaces, 15  
 To that which nature doth indeed require?—

*Camillo.* Nay, there is reason in your plea; 'twere hard.

*Giacomo.* 'Tis hard for a firm man to bear: but I  
 Have a dear wife, a lady of high birth,  
 Whose dowry in ill hour I lent my father 20  
 Without a bond or witness to the deed:  
 And children, who inherit her fine senses,  
 The fairest creatures in this breathing world;  
 And she and they reproach me not. Cardinal,  
 Do you not think the Pope would interpose 25  
 And stretch authority beyond the law?

*Camillo.* Though your peculiar case is hard, I know  
 The Pope will not divert the course of law.  
 After that impious feast the other night  
 I spoke with him, and urged him then to check 30  
 Your father's cruel hand; he frowned and said,  
 'Children are disobedient, and they sting



Their fathers' hearts to madness and despair,  
 Requiring years of care with contumely.  
 I pity the Count Cenci from my heart;  
 His outraged love perhaps awakened hate,  
 And thus he is exasperated to ill.  
 In the great war between the old and young  
 I, who have white hairs and a tottering body,  
 Will keep at least blameless neutrality.'

40

*Enter ORSINO.*

You, my good Lord Orsino, heard those words,  
*Orsino.* What words?

*Giacomo.* Alas, repeat them not again!  
 There then is no redress for me, at least  
 None but that which I may achieve myself,  
 Since I am driven to the brink.—But, say,  
 My innocent sister and my only brother  
 Are dying underneath my father's eye.  
 The memorable torturers of this land,  
 Galeaz Visconti, Borgia, Ezzelin,  
 Never inflicted on the meanest slave

45

50

What these endure; shall they have no protection?

*Camillo.* Why, if they would petition to the Pope  
 I see not how he could refuse it—yet  
 He holds it of most dangerous example  
 In aught to weaken the paternal power,  
 Being, as 'twere, the shadow of his own.  
 I pray you now excuse me. I have business  
 That will not bear delay.

55

[*Exit CAMILLO.*]

*Giacomo.* But you, Orsino,  
 Have the petition: wherefore not present it?

*Orsino.* I have presented it, and backed it with  
 My earnest prayers, and urgent interest;  
 It was returned unanswered. I doubt not  
 But that the strange and execrable deeds  
 Alleged in it—in truth they might well baffle  
 Any belief—have turned the Pope's displeasure  
 Upon the accusers from the criminal:  
 So I should guess from what *Camillo* said.

60

65

*Giacomo.* My friend, that palace-walking devil Gold  
 Has whispered silence to his Holiness:  
 And we are left, as scorpions ringed with fire.  
 What should we do but strike ourselves to death?  
 For he who is our murderous persecutor  
 Is shielded by a father's holy name,  
 Or I would—

70

[*Stops abruptly*]

*Orsino.* What? Fear not to speak your thought.

Words are but holy as the deeds they cover: 75  
 A priest who has forsworn the God he serves;  
 A judge who makes Truth weep at his decree;  
 A friend who should weave counsel, as I now,  
 But as the mantle of some selfish guile;  
 A father who is all a tyrant seems, 80  
 Were the profaner for his sacred name.

*Giacomo.* Ask me not what I think; the unwilling brain  
 Feigns often what it would not; and we trust  
 Imagination with such phantasies  
 As the tongue dares not fashion into words, 85  
 Which have no words, their horror makes them dim  
 To the mind's eye.—My heart denies itself  
 To think what you demand.

*Orsino.* But a friend's bosom  
 Is as the inmost cave of our own mind  
 Where we sit shut from the wide gaze of day, 90  
 And from the all-communicating air.  
 You look what I suspected—

*Giacomo.* Spare me now!  
 I am as one lost in a midnight wood,  
 Who dares not ask some harmless passenger  
 The path across the wilderness, lest he, 95  
 As my thoughts are, should be—a murderer.  
 I know you are my friend, and all I dare  
 Speak to my soul that will I trust with thee.  
 But now my heart is heavy, and would take  
 Lone counsel from a night of sleepless care. 100  
 Pardon me, that I say farewell—farewell!  
 I would that to my own suspected self  
 I could address a word so full of peace.

*Orsino.* Farewell!—Be your thoughts better or more bold.

[*Exit GIACOMO.* 105]

I had disposed the Cardinal Camillo  
 To feed his hope with cold encouragement:  
 It fortunately serves my close designs  
 That 'tis a trick of this same family  
 To analyse their own and other minds.  
 Such self-anatomy shall teach the will 110  
 Dangerous secrets: for it tempts our powers,  
 Knowing what must be thought, and may be done,  
 Into the depth of darkest purposes:  
 So Cenci fell into the pit; even I,  
 Since Beatrice unveiled me to myself, 115  
 And made me shrink from what I cannot shun,  
 Show a poor figure to my own esteem,  
 To which I grow half reconciled. I'll do

As little mischief as I can; that thought  
Shall fee the accuser conscience.

(*After a pause.*)

Now what harm

120

If Cenci should be murdered?—Yet, if murdered  
Wherefore by me? And what if I could take

The profit, yet omit the sin and peril

In such an action? Of all earthly things

I fear a man whose blows outspeed his words;

125

And such is Cenci: and while Cenci lives

His daughter's dowry were a secret grave

If a priest wins her.—Oh, fair Beatrice!

Would that I loved thee not, or loving thee

Could but despise danger and gold and all

130

That frowns between my wish and its effect,

Or smiles beyond it! There is no escape . . .

Her bright form kneels beside me at the altar,

And follows me to the resort of men,

And fills my slumber with tumultuous dreams,

135

So when I wake my blood seems liquid fire;

And if I strike my damp and dizzy head

My hot palm scorches it: her very name,

But spoken by a stranger, makes my heart

Sicken and pant; and thus unprofitably

140

I clasp the phantom of unfelt delights

Till weak imagination half possesses

The self-created shadow. Yet much longer

Will I not nurse this life of feverous hours:

From the unravelled hopes of Giacomo

145

I must work out my own dear purposes.

I see, as from a tower, the end of all:

Her father dead; her brother bound to me

By a dark secret, surer than the grave;

Her mother scared and unexpostulating

150

From the dread manner of her wish achieved:

And she!—Once more take courage, my faint heart;

What dares a friendless maiden matched with thee?

I have such foresight as assures success:

Some unbeheld divinity doth ever,

155

When dread events are near, stir up men's minds

To black suggestions; and he prospers best,

Not who becomes the instrument of ill,

But who can flatter the dark spirit, that makes

Its empire and its prey of other hearts

160

Till it became his slave . . . as I will do.

[*Exit.*]

## ACT III

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.* LUCRETIA, to her enter  
BEATRICE.

*Beatrice.* (*She enters staggering, and speaks wildly.*) Reach me  
that handkerchief!—My brain is hurt;  
My eyes are full of blood; just wipe them for me . . .  
I see but indistinctly . . .

*Lucretia.* My sweet child,  
You have no wound; 'tis only a cold dew  
That starts from your dear brow . . . Alas! Alas! 5  
What has befallen?

*Beatrice.* How comes this hair undone?  
Its wandering strings must be what blind me so,  
And yet I tied it fast.—O, horrible!  
The pavement sinks under my feet! The walls  
Spin round! I see a woman weeping there, 10  
And standing calm and motionless, whilst I  
Slide giddily as the world reels. . . My God!  
The beautiful blue heaven is flecked with blood!  
The sunshine on the floor is black! The air  
Is changed to vapours such as the dead breathe 15  
In charnel pits! pah! I am choked! There creeps  
A clinging, black, contaminating mist  
About me . . . 'tis substantial, heavy, thick,  
I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues  
My fingers and my limbs to one another, 20  
And eats into my sinews, and dissolves  
My flesh to a pollution, poisoning  
The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life!  
My God! I never knew what the mad felt  
Before; for I am mad beyond all doubt! 25  
(*More wildly.*) No, I am dead! These putrefying limbs  
Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul  
Which would burst forth into the wandering air! (*A pause.*)  
What hideous thought was that I had even now?  
'Tis gone; and yet its burthen remains here 30  
O'er these dull eyes . . . upon this weary heart!  
O, world! O, life! O, day! O, misery!

*Lucretia.* What ails thee, my poor child? She answers not:  
Her spirit apprehends the sense of pain,  
But not its cause; suffering has dried away 35  
The source from which it sprung . . .

*Beatrice* (*frantically*). Like Parricide . . .  
Misery has killed its father: yet its father  
Never like mine . . . O, God! What thing am I?

*Lucretia.* My dearest child, what has your father done?

*Beatrice* (*doubtfully*). Who art thou, questioner? I have no father. 40

(*Aside.*) She is the madhouse nurse who tends on me,  
It is a piteous office. [*To* LUCRETIA, *in a slow, subdued voice.*

Do you know

I thought I was that wretched Beatrice  
Men speak of, whom her father sometimes hales  
From hall to hall by the entangled hair; 45

At others, pens up naked in damp cells  
Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there,  
Till she will eat strange flesh. This woful story  
So did I overact in my sick dreams,  
That I imagined . . . no, it cannot be! 50

Horrible things have been in this wide world,  
Prodigious mixtures, and confusions strange  
Of good and ill; and worse have been conceived  
Than ever there was found a heart to do.  
But never fancy imaged such a deed 55

As . . . [*Pauses, suddenly recollecting herself.*

Who art thou? Swear to me, ere I die  
With fearful expectation, that indeed  
Thou art not what thou seemest . . . Mother!

*Lucretia.* Oh!

My sweet child, know you . . .

*Beatrice.* Yet speak it not:

For then if this be truth, that other too 60  
Must be a truth, a firm enduring truth,  
Linked with each lasting circumstance of life,  
Never to change, never to pass away.

Why so it is. This is the Cenci Palace;  
Thou art Lucretia; I am Beatrice. 65

I have talked some wild words, but will no more.  
Mother, come near me: from this point of time,  
I am . . . [*Her voice dies away faintly.*

*Lucretia.* Alas! What has befallen thee, child?

What has thy father done?

*Beatrice.* What have I done?

Am I not innocent? Is it my crime 70  
That one with white hair, and imperious brow,

Who tortured me from my forgotten years,  
As parents only dare, should call himself  
My father, yet should be!—Oh, what am I?

What name, what place, what memory shall be mine? 75  
What retrospects, outliving even despair?

*Lucretia.* He is a violent tyrant, surely, child:  
We know that death alone can make us free;

His death or ours. But what can he have done  
Of deadlier outrage or worse injury? 80  
Thou art unlike thyself; thine eyes shoot forth  
A wandering and strange spirit. Speak to me,  
Unlock those pallid hands whose fingers twine  
With one another.

*Beatrice.* 'Tis the restless life  
Tortured within them. If I try to speak 85  
I shall go mad. Ay, something must be done;  
What, yet I know not . . . something which shall make  
The thing that I have suffered but a shadow  
In the dread lightning which avenges it;  
Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying 90  
The consequence of what it cannot cure.  
Some such thing is to be endured or done:  
When I know what, I shall be still and calm,  
And never anything will move me more.  
But now!—O blood, which art my father's blood, 95  
Circling through these contaminated veins,  
If thou, poured forth on the polluted earth,  
Could wash away the crime, and punishment  
By which I suffer . . . no, that cannot be!  
Many might doubt there were a God above 100  
Who sees and permits evil, and so die:  
That faith no agony shall obscure in me.

*Lucretia.* It must indeed have been some bitter wrong;  
Yet what, I dare not guess. Oh, my lost child,  
Hide not in proud impenetrable grief 105  
Thy sufferings from my fear.

*Beatrice.* I hide them not.  
What are the words which you would have me speak?  
I, who can feign no image in my mind  
Of that which has transformed me: I, whose thought  
Is like a ghost shrouded and folded up 110  
In its own formless horror: of all words,  
That minister to mortal intercourse,  
Which wouldst thou hear? For there is none to tell  
My misery: if another ever knew  
Aught like to it, she died as I will die, 115  
And left it, as I must, without a name.  
Death! Death! Our law and our religion call thee  
A punishment and a reward . . . Oh, which  
Have I deserved?

*Lucretia.* The peace of innocence;  
Till in your season you be called to heaven. 120  
Whate'er you may have suffered, you have done  
No evil. Death must be the punishment

Of crime, or the reward of trampling down  
The thorns which God has strewed upon the path  
Which leads to immortality.

*Beatrice.* Ay, death . . . 125  
The punishment of crime. I pray thee, God,  
Let me not be bewildered while I judge.  
If I must live day after day, and keep  
These limbs, the unworthy temple of Thy spirit,  
As a foul den from which what Thou abhorrest 130  
May mock Thee, unavenged . . . it shall not be!  
Self-murder . . . no, that might be no escape,  
For Thy decree yawns like a Hell between  
Our will and it:—O! In this mortal world  
There is no vindication and no law 135  
Which can adjudge and execute the doom  
Of that through which I suffer.

*Enter ORSINO.*

(*She approaches him solemnly.*) Welcome, Friend!  
I have to tell you that, since last we met,  
I have endured a wrong so great and strange,  
That neither life nor death can give me rest. 140  
Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds  
Which have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.

*Orsino.* And what is he who has thus injured you?

*Beatrice.* The man they call my father: a dread name.

*Orsino.* It cannot be . . .

*Beatrice.* What it can be, or not, 145  
Forbear to think. It is, and it has been;  
Advise me how it shall not be again.  
I thought to die; but a religious awe  
Restrains me, and the dread lest death itself  
Might be no refuge from the consciousness 150  
Of what is yet unexpiated. Oh, speak!

*Orsino.* Accuse him of the deed, and let the law  
Avenge thee.

*Beatrice.* Oh, ice-hearted counsellor!  
If I could find a word that might make known  
The crime of my destroyer; and that done, 155  
My tongue should like a knife tear out the secret  
Which cankers my heart's core; ay, lay all bare  
So that my unpolluted fame should be  
With vilest gossips a stale mouthèd story;  
A mock, a byword, an astonishment:— 160  
If this were done, which never shall be done,  
Think of the offender's gold, his dreaded hate,  
And the strange horror of the accuser's tale,

Baffling belief, and overpowering speech;  
 Scarce whispered, unimaginable, wrapped 165  
 In hideous hints . . . Oh, most assured redress!

*Orsino.* You will endure it then?

*Beatrice.* Endure?—Orsino,  
 It seems your counsel is small profit.

[*Turns from him, and speaks half to herself.*

Ay,

All must be suddenly resolved and done.  
 What is this undistinguishable mist 170  
 Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow,  
 Darkening each other?

*Orsino.* Should the offender live?

Triumph in his misdeed? and make, by use,  
 His crime, whate'er it is, dreadful no doubt,  
 Thine element; until thou mayst become 175  
 Utterly lost; subdued even to the hue  
 Of that which thou permittest?

*Beatrice (to herself).* Mighty death!  
 Thou double-visaged shadow? Only judge!

Rightfullest arbiter! [*She retires absorbed in thought.*

*Lucretia.* If the lightning  
 Of God has e'er descended to avenge . . . 180

*Orsino.* Blaspheme not! His high Providence commits  
 Its glory on this earth, and their own wrongs  
 Into the hands of men; if they neglect  
 To punish crime . . .

*Lucretia.* But if one, like this wretch,  
 Should mock, with gold, opinion, law, and power? 185

If there be no appeal to that which makes  
 The guiltiest tremble? If because our wrongs,  
 For that they are unnatural, strange, and monstrous,  
 Exceed all measure of belief? O God!

If, for the very reasons which should make 190  
 Redress most swift and sure, our injurer triumphs?  
 And we, the victims, bear worse punishment  
 Than that appointed for their torturer?

*Orsino.* Think not  
 But that there is redress where there is wrong,  
 So we be bold enough to seize it.

*Lucretia.* How? 195

If there were any way to make all sure,  
 I know not . . . but I think it might be good  
 To . . .

*Orsino.* Why, his late outrage to Beatrice;  
 For it is such, as I but faintly guess,  
 As makes remorse dishonour, and leaves her 200



Only one duty, how she may avenge:  
 You, but one refuge from ills ill endured;  
 Me, but one counsel . . .

*Lucretia.* For we cannot hope  
 That aid, or retribution, or resource  
 Will arise thence, where every other one 205  
 Might find them with less need. [*BEATRICE advances.*

*Orsino.* Then . . .

*Beatrice.* Peace, Orsino!

And, honoured Lady, while I speak, I pray,  
 That you put off, as garments overworn,  
 Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear,  
 And all the fit restraints of daily life, 210  
 Which have been borne from childhood, but which now  
 Would be a mockery to my holier plea.

As I have said, I have endured a wrong,  
 Which, though it be expressionless, is such  
 As asks atonement; both for what is past, 215  
 And lest I be reserved, day after day,  
 To load with crimes an overburthened soul,  
 And be . . . what ye can dream not. I have prayed  
 To God, and I have talked with my own heart,  
 And have unravelled my entangled will, 220  
 And have at length determined what is right.  
 Art thou my friend, Orsino? False or true?  
 Pledge thy salvation ere I speak.

*Orsino.* I swear  
 To dedicate my cunning, and my strength,  
 My silence, and whatever else is mine, 225  
 To thy commands.

*Lucretia.* You think we should devise  
 His death?

*Beatrice.* And execute what is devised,  
 And suddenly. We must be brief and bold.

*Orsino.* And yet most cautious.

*Lucretia.* For the jealous laws  
 Would punish us with death and infamy 230  
 For that which it became themselves to do.

*Beatrice.* Be cautious as ye may, but prompt. Orsino,  
 What are the means?

*Orsino.* I know two dull, fierce outlaws,  
 Who think man's spirit as a worm's, and they  
 Would trample out, for any slight caprice, 235  
 The meanest or the noblest life. This mood  
 Is marketable here in Rome. They sell  
 What we now want.

*Lucretia.* To-morrow before dawn,  
 Cenci will take us to that lonely rock,  
 Petrella, in the Apulian Apennines. 240  
 If he arrive there . . .

*Beatrice.* He must not arrive.

*Orsino.* Will it be dark before you reach the tower?

*Lucretia.* The sun will scarce be set.

*Beatrice.* But I remember

Two miles on this side of the fort, the road  
 Crosses a deep ravine; 'tis rough and narrow, 245  
 And winds with short turns down the precipice;  
 And in its depth there is a mighty rock,  
 Which has, from unimaginable years,  
 Sustained itself with terror and with toil  
 Over a gulf, and with the agony 250  
 With which it clings seems slowly coming down;  
 Even as a wretched soul hour after hour,  
 Clings to the mass of life; yet clinging, leans;  
 And leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss  
 In which it fears to fall: beneath this crag 255  
 Huge as despair, as if in weariness,  
 The melancholy mountain yawns . . . below,  
 You hear but see not an impetuous torrent  
 Raging among the caverns, and a bridge  
 Crosses the chasm; and high above there grow, 260  
 With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag,  
 Cedars, and yews, and pines; whose tangled hair  
 Is matted in one solid roof of shade  
 By the dark ivy's twine. At noonday here  
 'Tis twilight, and at sunset blackest night. 265

*Orsino.* Before you reach that bridge make some excuse  
 For spurring on your mules, or loitering  
 Until . . .

*Beatrice.* What sound is that?

*Lucretia.* Hark! No, it cannot be a servant's step  
 It must be Cenci, unexpectedly 270  
 Returned . . . Make some excuse for being here.

*Beatrice.* (*To ORSINO, as she goes out.*) That step we hear  
 approach must never pass  
 The bridge of which we spoke.

[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA and BEATRICE.

*Orsino.*

What shall I do?

Cenci must find me here, and I must bear  
 The imperious inquisition of his looks 275  
 As to what brought me hither: let me mask  
 Mine own in some inane and vacant smile.

*Enter GIACOMO, in a hurried manner.*

How! Have you ventured hither? Know you then  
That Cenci is from home?

*Giacomo.* I sought him here;  
And now must wait till he returns.

*Orsino.* Great God! 280  
Weigh you the danger of this rashness?

*Giacomo.* Ay!  
Does my destroyer know his danger? We  
Are now no more, as once, parent and child,  
But man to man; the oppressor to the oppressed;  
The slanderer to the slandered; foe to foe: 285  
He has cast Nature off, which was his shield,  
And Nature casts him off, who is her shame;  
And I spurn both. Is it a father's throat  
Which I will shake, and say, I ask not gold;  
I ask not happy years; nor memories 290  
Of tranquil childhood; nor home-sheltered love;  
Though all these hast thou torn from me, and more;  
But only my fair fame; only one hoard  
Of peace, which I thought hidden from thy hate,  
Under the penury heaped on me by thee, 295  
Or I will . . . God can understand and pardon,  
Why should I speak with man?

*Orsino.* Be calm, dear friend.

*Giacomo.* Well, I will calmly tell you what he did.  
This old Francesco Cenci, as you know,  
Borrowed the dowry of my wife from me, 300  
And then denied the loan; and left me so  
In poverty, the which I sought to mend  
By holding a poor office in the state.  
It had been promised to me, and already  
I bought new clothing for my ragged babes, 305  
And my wife smiled; and my heart knew repose.  
When Cenci's intercession, as I found,  
Conferred this office on a wretch, whom thus  
He paid for vilest service. I returned  
With this ill news, and we sate sad together 310  
Solacing our despondency with tears  
Of such affection and unbroken faith  
As temper life's worst bitterness; when he,  
As he is wont, came to upbraid and curse,  
Mocking our poverty, and telling us 315  
Such was God's scourge for disobedient sons.  
And then, that I might strike him dumb with shame,  
I spoke of my wife's dowry; but he coined

A brief yet specious tale, how I had wasted  
 The sum in secret riot; and he saw 320  
 My wife was touched, and he went smiling forth.  
 And when I knew the impression he had made,  
 And felt my wife insult with silent scorn  
 My ardent truth, and look averse and cold,  
 I went forth too: but soon returned again; 325  
 Yet not so soon but that my wife had taught  
 My children her harsh thoughts, and they all cried,  
 'Give us clothes, father! Give us better food!  
 What you in one night squander were enough  
 For months!' I looked, and saw that home was hell. 330  
 And to that hell will I return to more  
 Until mine enemy has rendered up  
 Atonement, or, as he gave life to me  
 I will, reversing Nature's law . . .  
*Orsino.* Trust me,  
 The compensation which thou seekest here 335  
 Will be denied.  
*Giacomo.* Then . . . Are you not my friend?  
 Did you not hint at the alternative,  
 Upon the brink of which you see I stand,  
 The other day when we conversed together?  
 My wrongs were then less. That word parricide, 340  
 Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.  
*Orsino.* It must be fear itself, for the bare word  
 Is hollow mockery. Mark, how wisest God  
 Draws to one point the threads of a just doom,  
 So sanctifying it: what you devise 345  
 Is, as it were, accomplished.  
*Giacomo.* Is he dead?  
*Orsino.* His grave is ready. Know that since we met  
 Cenci has done an outrage to his daughter.  
*Giacomo.* What outrage?  
*Orsino.* That she speaks not, but you may 350  
 Conceive such half conjectures as I do,  
 From her fixed paleness, and the lofty grief  
 Of her stern brow bent on the idle air,  
 And her severe unmodulated voice,  
 Drowning both tenderness and dread; and last  
 From this; that whilst her step-mother and I, 355  
 Bewildered in our horror, talked together  
 With obscure hints; both self-misunderstood  
 And darkly guessing, stumbling, in our talk,  
 Over the truth, and yet to its revenge,  
 She interrupted us, and with a look 360  
 Which told before she spoke it, he must die: . . .

*Giacomo.* It is enough. My doubts are well appeased;  
 There is a higher reason for the act  
 Than mine; there is a holier judge than me,  
 A more unblamed avenger. *Beatrice,* 365  
 Who in the gentleness of thy sweet youth  
 Hast never trodden on a worm, or bruised  
 A living flower, but thou hast pitied it  
 With needless tears! Fair sister, thou in whom  
 Men wondered how such loveliness and wisdom 370  
 Did not destroy each other! Is there made  
 Ravage of thee? O, heart, I ask no more  
 Justification! Shall I wait, Orsino,  
 Till he return, and stab him at the door?  
*Orsino.* Not so; some accident might interpose 375  
 To rescue him from what is now most sure;  
 And you are unprovided where to fly,  
 How to excuse or to conceal. Nay, listen:  
 All is contrived; success is so assured  
 That . . .

*Enter BEATRICE.*

*Beatrice.* 'Tis my brother's voice! You know me not?  
*Giacomo.* My sister, my lost sister!  
*Beatrice.* Lost indeed! 381  
 I see Orsino has talked with you, and  
 That you conjecture things too horrible  
 To speak, yet far less than the truth. Now, stay not,  
 He might return: yet kiss me; I shall know 385  
 That then thou hast consented to his death.  
 Farewell, farewell! Let piety to God,  
 Brotherly love, justice and clemency,  
 And all things that make tender hardest hearts  
 Make thine hard, brother. Answer not . . . farewell. 390  
*[Excunt severally.]*

SCENE II.—*A mean Apartment in GIACOMO's House. GIACOMO alone.*

*Giacomo.* 'Tis midnight, and Orsino comes not yet.  
*[Thunder, and the sound of a storm.]*  
 What! can the everlasting elements  
 Feel with a worm like man? If so, the shaft  
 Of mercy-wingèd lightning would not fall  
 On stones and trees. My wife and children sleep: 5  
 They are now living in unmeaning dreams:  
 But I must wake, still doubting if that deed  
 Be just which is most necessary. O,  
 Thou un replenishing lamp! whose narrow fire  
 Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge 10

Devouring darkness hovers! Thou small flame,  
 Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,  
 Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,  
 Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail and be  
 As thou hadst never been! So wastes and sinks 15  
 Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine:  
 But that no power can fill with vital oil  
 That broken lamp of flesh. Ha! 'tis the blood  
 Which fed these veins that ebbs till all is cold:  
 It is the form that moulded mine that sinks 20  
 Into the white and yellow spasms of death:  
 It is the soul by which mine was arrayed  
 In God's immortal likeness which now stands  
 Naked before Heaven's judgement seat! [A bell strikes.

One! Two!

The hours crawl on; and when my hairs are white, 25  
 My son will then perhaps be waiting thus,  
 Tortured between just hate and vain remorse;  
 Chiding the tardy messenger of news  
 Like those which I expect. I almost wish  
 He be not dead, although my wrongs are great; 30  
 Yet . . . 'tis Orsino's step . . .

*Enter ORSINO.*

Speak!

*Orsino.* I am come  
 To say he has escaped.

*Giacomo.* Escaped!

*Orsino.* And safe  
 Within Petrella. He passed by the spot  
 Appointed for the deed an hour too soon.

*Giacomo.* Are we the fools of such contingencies? 35  
 And do we waste in blind misgivings thus  
 The hours when we should act? Then wind and thunder,  
 Which seemed to howl his knell, is the loud laughter  
 With which Heaven mocks our weakness! I henceforth  
 Will ne'er repent of aught designed or done 40  
 But my repentance.

*Orsino.* See, the lamp is out.

*Giacomo.* If no remorse is ours when the dim air  
 Has drank this innocent flame, why should we quail  
 When Cenci's life, that light by which ill spirits  
 See the worst deeds they prompt, shall sink for ever? 45  
 No, I am hardened.

*Orsino.* Why, what need of this?  
 Who feared the pale intrusion of remorse  
 In a just deed? Although our first plan failed,

Doubt not but he will soon be laid to rest.

But light the lamp; let us not talk i' the dark.

50

*Giacomo (lighting the lamp).* And yet once quenched I cannot  
thus relume

My father's life: do you not think his ghost

Might plead that argument with God?

*Orsino.*

Once gone

You cannot now recall your sister's peace;

Your own extinguished years of youth and hope;

55

Nor your wife's bitter words; nor all the taunts

Which, from the prosperous, weak misfortune takes;

Nor your dead mother; nor . . .

*Giacomo.*

O, speak no more!

I am resolved, although this very hand

Must quench the life that animated it.

60

*Orsino.* There is no need of that. Listen: you know

Olimpio, the castellan of Petrella

In old Colonna's time; him whom your father

Degraded from his post? And Marzio,

That desperate wretch, whom he deprived last year

65

Of a reward of blood, well earned and due?

*Giacomo.* I knew Olimpio; and they say he hated

Old Cenci so, that in his silent rage

His lips grew white only to see him pass.

Of Marzio I know nothing.

*Orsino.*

Marzio's hate

70

Matches Olimpio's. I have sent these men,

But in your name, and as at your request,

To talk with Beatrice and Lucretia.

*Giacomo.* Only to talk?

*Orsino.*

The moments which even now

Pass onward to to-morrow's midnight hour

75

May memorize their flight with death: ere then

They must have talked, and may perhaps have done,

And made an end . . .

*Giacomo.*

Listen! What sound is that?

*Orsino.* The house-dog moans, and the beams crack: nought else.

*Giacomo.* It is my wife complaining in her sleep:

80

I doubt not she is saying bitter things

Of me, and all my children round her dreaming

That I deny them sustenance.

*Orsino.*

Whilst he

Who truly took it from them, and who fills

Their hungry rest with bitterness, now sleeps

85

Lapped in bad pleasures, and triumphantly

Mocks thee in visions of successful hate

Too like the truth of day.

*Giacomo.* If e'er he wakes  
Again, I will not trust to hireling hands . . .  
*Orsino.* Why, that were well. I must be gone; good-night.  
When next we meet—may all be done!

*Giacomo.* And all 91  
Forgotten: Oh, that I had never been! [*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

## ACT IV

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Castle of Petrella. Enter CENCI.*

*Cenci.* She comes not; yet I left her even now  
Vanquished and faint. She knows the penalty  
Or her delay: yet what if threats are vain?  
Am I not now within Petrella's moat?  
Or fear I still the eyes and ears of Rome? 5  
Might I not drag her by the golden hair?  
Stamp on her? Keep her sleepless till her brain  
Be overworn? Tame her with chains and famine?  
Less would suffice. Yet so to leave undone  
What I most seek! No, 'tis her stubborn will 10  
Which by its own consent shall stoop as low  
As that which drags it down.

*Enter LUCRETIA.*

Thou loathèd wretch!  
Hide thee from my abhorrence: fly, begone!  
Yet stay! Bid Beatrice come hither.  
*Lucretia.* Oh, 15  
Husband! I pray for thine own wretched sake  
Heed what thou dost. A man who walks like thee  
Through crimes, and through the danger of his crimes,  
Each hour may stumble o'er a sudden grave.  
And thou art old; thy hairs are hoary gray;  
As thou wouldst save thyself from death and hell, 20  
Pity thy daughter; give her to some friend  
In marriage: so that she may tempt thee not  
To hatred, or worse thoughts, if worse there be.  
*Cenci.* What! like her sister who has found a home  
To mock my hate from with prosperity? 25  
Strange ruin shall destroy both her and thee  
And all that yet remain. My death may be  
Rapid, her destiny outspeeds it. Go,  
Bid her come hither, and before my mood  
Be changed, lest I should drag her by the hair. 30  
*Lucretia.* She sent me to thee, husband. At thy presence



She fell, as thou dost know, into a trance;  
 And in that trance she heard a voice which said,  
 'Cenci must die! Let him confess himself!  
 Even now the accusing Angel waits to hear 35  
 If God, to punish his enormous crimes,  
 Harden his dying heart!'

*Cenci.* Why—such things are . . .  
 No doubt divine revealings may be made.  
 'Tis plain I have been favoured from above, 39  
 For when I cursed my sons they died.—Ay . . . so . . .  
 As to the right or wrong, that's talk . . . repentance . . .  
 Repentance is an easy moment's work  
 And more depends on God than me. Well . . . well . . .  
 I must give up the greater point, which was  
 To poison and corrupt her soul.

[*A pause; LUCRETIA approaches anxiously, and then shrinks back as he speaks.*

One, two; 45  
 Ay . . . Rocco and Cristofano my curse  
 Strangled: and Giacomo, I think, will find  
 Life a worse Hell than that beyond the grave:  
 Beatrice shall, if there be skill in hate,  
 Die in despair, blaspheming: to Bernardo, 50  
 He is so innocent, I will bequeath  
 The memory of these deeds, and make his youth  
 The sepulchre of hope, where evil thoughts  
 Shall grow like weeds on a neglected tomb.  
 When all is done, out in the wide Campagna, 55  
 I will pile up my silver and my gold;  
 My costly robes, paintings and tapestries;  
 My parchments and all records of my wealth,  
 And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave  
 Of my possessions nothing but my name; 60  
 Which shall be an inheritance to strip  
 Its wearer bare as infamy. That done,  
 My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign  
 Into the hands of him who wielded it;  
 Be it for its own punishment or theirs, 65  
 He will not ask it of me till the lash  
 Be broken in its last and deepest wound;  
 Until its hate be all inflicted. Yet,  
 Lest death outspeed my purpose, let me make  
 Short work and sure . . .

[*Going.*

*Lucretia. (Stops him.)* Oh, stay! It was a feint:  
 She had no vision, and she heard no voice.  
 I said it but to awe thee.

70

*Cenci.* That is well.

Vile palterer with the sacred truth of God,  
 Be thy soul choked with that blaspheming lie!  
 For Beatrice worse terrors are in store  
 To bend her to my will. 75

*Lucretia.* Oh! to what will?  
 What cruel sufferings more than she has known  
 Canst thou inflict?

*Cenci.* Andrea! Go call my daughter,  
 And if she comes not tell her that I come.  
 What sufferings? I will drag her, step by step, 80  
 Through infamies unheard of among men:  
 She shall stand shelterless in the broad noon  
 Of public scorn, for acts blazoned abroad,  
 One among which shall be . . . What? Canst thou guess?  
 She shall become (for what she most abhors 85  
 Shall have a fascination to entrap  
 Her loathing will) to her own conscious self  
 All she appears to others; and when dead,  
 As she shall die unshrived and unforgiven,  
 A rebel to her father and her God, 90  
 Her corpse shall be abandoned to the hounds;  
 Her name shall be the terror of the earth;  
 Her spirit shall approach the throne of God  
 Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make  
 Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin. 95

*Enter ANDREA.*

*Andrea.* The Lady Beatrice . . .

*Cenci.* Speak, pale slave! What  
 Said she?

*Andrea.* My Lord, 'twas what she looked; she said:  
 'Go tell my father that I see the gulf  
 Of Hell between us two, which he may pass,  
 I will not.'

[*Exit ANDREA.*  
 100

*Cenci.* Go thou quick, Lucretia,  
 Tell her to come; yet let her understand  
 Her coming is consent: and say, moreover,  
 That if she come not I will curse her.

[*Exit LUCRETIA.*

Ha!  
 With what but with a father's curse doth God  
 Panic-strike armèd victory, and make pale 105  
 Cities in their prosperity? The world's Father  
 Must grant a parent's prayer against his child,  
 Be he who asks even what men call me.  
 Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers

Awe her before I speak? For I on them  
Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came.

116

*Enter* LUCRETIA.

Well; what? Speak, wretch!

*Lucretia.* She said, 'I cannot come;  
Go tell my father that I see a torrent  
Of his own blood raging between us.'

*Cenci* (*kneeling*). God!  
Hear me! If this most specious mass of flesh, 115  
Which Thou hast made my daughter; this my blood,  
This particle of my divided being;  
Or rather, this my bane and my disease,  
Whose sight infects and poisons me; this devil  
Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant 120  
To aught good use; if her bright loveliness  
Was kindled to illumine this dark world;  
If nursed by Thy selectest dew of love  
Such virtues blossom in her as should make  
The peace of life, I pray Thee for my sake, 125  
As Thou the common God and Father art  
Of her, and me, and all; reverse that doom!  
Earth, in the name of God, let her food be  
Poison, until she be encrusted round  
With leprous stains! Heaven, rain upon her head 130  
The blistering drops of the Maremma's dew,  
Till she be speckled like a toad; parch up  
Those love-enkindled lips, warp those fine limbs  
To loathèd lameness! All-beholding sun,  
Strike in thine envy those life-darting eyes 135  
With thine own blinding beams!

*Lucretia.* Peace! Peace!  
For thine own sake unsay those dreadful words.  
When high God grants He punishes such prayers.

*Cenci* (*leaping up, and throwing his right hand towards Heaven*).  
He does His will, I mine! This in addition,  
That if she have a child . . .

*Lucretia.* Horrible thought! 140  
*Cenci.* That if she ever have a child; and thou,  
Quick Nature! I adjure thee by thy God,  
That thou be fruitful in her, and increase  
And multiply, fulfilling his command,  
And my deep imprecation! May it be 145  
A hideous likeness of herself, that as  
From a distorting mirror, she may see  
Her image mixed with what she most abhors,

Smiling upon her from her nursing breast.  
 And that the child may from its infancy 150  
 Grow, day by day, more wicked and deformed,  
 Turning her mother's love to misery:  
 And that both she and it may live until  
 It shall repay her care and pain with hate,  
 Or what may else be more unnatural. 155  
 So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs  
 Of the loud world to a dishonoured grave.  
 Shall I revoke this curse? Go, bid her come,  
 Before my words are chronicled in Heaven.

[*Exit* LUCRETIA.

I do not feel as if I were a man,  
 But like a fiend appointed to chastise  
 The offences of some unremembered world.  
 My blood is running up and down my veins;  
 A fearful pleasure makes it prick and tingle:  
 I feel a giddy sickness of strange awe; 165  
 My heart is beating with an expectation  
 Of horrid joy.

*Enter* LUCRETIA.

What? Speak!

*Lucretia.* She bids thee curse;  
 And if thy curses, as they cannot do,  
 Could kill her soul . . .

*Cenci.* She would not come. 'Tis well,  
 I can do both: first take what I demand, 170  
 And then extort concession. To thy chamber!  
 Fly ere I spurn thee: and beware this night  
 That thou cross not my footsteps. It were safer  
 To come between the tiger and his prey. [*Exit* LUCRETIA.  
 It must be late; mine eyes grow weary dim 175  
 With unaccustomed heaviness of sleep.  
 Conscience! Oh, thou most insolent of lies!  
 They say that sleep, that healing dew of Heaven,  
 Steeps not in balm the foldings of the brain  
 Which thinks thee an impostor. I will go 180  
 First to belie thee with an hour of rest,  
 Which will be deep and calm, I feel: and then . . .  
 O, multitudinous Hell, the fiends will shake  
 Thine arches with the laughter of their joy!  
 There shall be lamentation heard in Heaven 185  
 As o'er an angel fallen; and upon Earth  
 All good shall droop and sicken, and ill things  
 Shall with a spirit of unnatural life  
 Stir and be quickened . . . even as I am now. [*Exit*

SCENE II.—*Before the Castle of Petrella. Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA above on the Ramparts.*

*Beatrice.* They come not yet.

*Lucretia.* 'Tis scarce midnight.

*Beatrice.* How slow

Behind the course of thought, even sick with speed,  
Lags leaden-footed time!

*Lucretia.* The minutes pass . . .  
If he should wake before the deed is done?

*Beatrice.* O, mother! He must never wake again. 5  
What thou hast said persuades me that our act  
Will but dislodge a spirit of deep hell  
Out of a human form.

*Lucretia.* 'Tis true he spoke  
Of death and judgement with strange confidence  
For one so wicked; as a man believing 10  
In God, yet recking not of good or ill.  
And yet to die without confession! . . .

*Beatrice.* Oh!  
Believe that Heaven is merciful and just,  
And will not add our dread necessity  
To the amount of his offences.

*Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO, below.*

*Lucretia.* See, 15  
They come.

*Beatrice.* All mortal things must hasten thus  
To their dark end. Let us go down.

[*Exeunt LUCRETIA and BEATRICE from above*]

*Olimpio.* How feel you to this work?

*Marzio.* As one who thinks  
A thousand crowns excellent market price  
For an old murderer's life. Your cheeks are pale. 20

*Olimpio.* It is the white reflection of your own,  
Which you call pale.

*Marzio.* Is that their natural hue?

*Olimpio.* Or 'tis my hate and the deferred desire  
To wreak it, which extinguishes their blood.

*Marzio.* You are inclined then to this business?

*Olimpio.* Ay. 25  
If one should bribe me with a thousand crowns  
To kill a serpent which had stung my child,  
I could not be more willing.

*Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA, below.*

Noble ladies!

*Beatrice.* Are ye resolved?

*Olimpio.*

Is he asleep?

*Marzio.*

Is all

Quiet?

*Lucretia.* I mixed an opiate with his drink:

30

He sleeps so soundly . . .

*Beatrice.*

That his death will be

But as a change of sin-chastising dreams,

A dark continuance of the Hell within him,

Which God extinguish! But ye are resolved?

Ye know it is a high and holy deed?

35

*Olimpio.* We are resolved.*Marzio.*

As to the how this act

Be warranted, it rests with you.

*Beatrice.*

Well, follow!

*Olimpio.* Hush! Hark! What noise is that?*Marzio.*

Ha! some one comes!

*Beatrice.* Ye conscience-stricken cravens, rock to rest

Your baby hearts. It is the iron gate,

40

Which ye left open, swinging to the wind,

That enters whistling as in scorn. Come, follow!

And be your steps like mine, light, quick and bold.

[*Exeunt.*]SCENE III.—*An Apartment in the Castle. Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA.**Lucretia.* They are about it now.*Beatrice.*

Nay, it is done.

*Lucretia.* I have not heard him groan.*Beatrice.*

He will not groan.

*Lucretia.* What sound is that?*Beatrice.*

List! 'tis the tread of feet

About his bed.

*Lucretia.* My God!

If he be now a cold stiff corpse . . .

*Beatrice.*

O, fear not

5

What may be done, but what is left undone:

The act seals all.

*Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO.*

Is it accomplished?

*Marzio.*

What?

*Olimpio.* Did you not call?*Beatrice.*

When?

*Olimpio.*

Now.

*Beatrice.*

I ask if all is over?

*Olimpio.* We dare not kill an old and sleeping man;

10

His thin gray hair, his stern and reverend brow,

His veined hands crossed on his heaving breast,

And the calm innocent sleep in which he lay,

Quelled me. Indeed, indeed, I cannot do it.

*Marzio.* But I was bolder; for I chid Olimpio,  
And bade him bear his wrongs to his own grave 15  
And leave me the reward. And now my knife  
Touched the loose wrinkled throat, when the old man  
Stirred in his sleep, and said, 'God! hear, O, hear,  
A father's curse! What, art Thou not our Father?'  
And then he laughed. I knew it was the ghost 20  
Of my dead father speaking through his lips,  
And could not kill him.

*Beatrice.* Miserable slaves!  
Where, if ye dare not kill a sleeping man,  
Found ye the boldness to return to me  
With such a deed undone? Base palterers! 25  
Cowards and traitors! Why, the very conscience  
Which ye would sell for gold and for revenge  
Is an equivocation: it sleeps over  
A thousand daily acts disgracing men;  
And when a deed where mercy insults Heaven . . . 30  
Why do I talk?

[*Snatching a dagger from one of them and raising it.*

Hadst thou a tongue to say,  
'She murdered her own father!'—I must do it!  
But never dream ye shall outlive him long!

*Olimpio.* Stop, for God's sake!

*Marzio.* I will go back and kill him.

*Olimpio.* Give me the weapon, we must do thy will. 35

*Beatrice.* Take it! Depart! Return!

[*Exeunt OLIMPIO and MARZIO.*

How pale thou art!

We do but that which 'twere a deadly crime  
To leave undone.

*Lucretia.* Would it were done!

*Beatrice.* Even whilst  
That doubt is passing through your mind, the world  
Is conscious of a change. Darkness and Hell 40  
Have swallowed up the vapour they sent forth  
To blacken the sweet light of life. My breath  
Comes, methinks, lighter, and the jellied blood  
Runs freely through my veins. Hark!

*Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO.*

He is . . .

*Olimpio.* Dead!

*Marzio.* We strangled him that there might be no blood; 45  
And then we threw his heavy corpse i' the garden  
Under the balcony; 'twill seem it fell.

*Beatrice* (*giving them a bag of coin*). Here, take this gold, and hasten to your homes.

And, Marzio, because thou wast only awed  
By that which made me tremble, wear thou this! 50

[*Clothes him in a rich mantle.*

It was the mantle which my grandfather  
Wore in his high prosperity, and men  
Envied his state: so may they envy thine.  
Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God  
To a just use. Live long and thrive! And, mark, 55  
If thou hast crimes, repent: this deed is none.

[*A horn is sounded.*

*Lucretia*. Hark, 'tis the castle horn; my God! it sounds  
Like the last trump.

*Beatrice*. Some tedious guest is coming.

*Lucretia*. The drawbridge is let down; there is a tramp  
Of horses in the court; fly, hide yourselves! 60

[*Exeunt OLIMPIO and MARZIO.*

*Beatrice*. Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest;  
I scarcely need to counterfeit it now:  
The spirit which doth reign within these limbs  
Seems strangely undisturbed. I could even sleep 64  
Fearless and calm: all ill is surely past. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Another Apartment in the Castle. Enter on one side the LEGATE SAVELLA, introduced by a Servant, and on the other LUCRETIA and BERNARDO.*

*Savella*. Lady, my duty to his Holiness  
Be my excuse that thus unseasonably  
I break upon your rest. I must speak with  
Count Cenci; doth he sleep?

*Lucretia* (*in a hurried and confused manner*). I think he sleeps;  
Yet wake him not, I pray, spare me awhile, 5  
He is a wicked and wrathful man;  
Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night,  
Which is, I know, a hell of angry dreams,  
It were not well; indeed it were not well.  
Wait till day break . . . (*aside*) O, I am deadly sick! 10

*Savella*. I grieve thus to distress you, but the Count  
Must answer charges of the gravest import,  
And suddenly; such my commission is.

*Lucretia* (*with increased agitation*). I dare not rouse him: I  
know none who dare . . .  
'Twere perilous; . . . you might as safely waken 15  
A serpent; or a corpse in which some fiend  
Were laid to sleep.

*Savella*. Lady, my moments here



Are counted. I must rouse him from his sleep,  
Since none else dare.

*Lucretia (aside).* O, terror! O, despair!  
(*To* BERNARDO.) Bernardo, conduct you the Lord Legate to 20  
Your father's chamber. [*Exeunt* SAVELLA and BERNARDO.]

*Enter* BEATRICE.

*Beatrice.* 'Tis a messenger  
Come to arrest the culprit who now stands  
Before the throne of unappealable God.  
Both Earth and Heaven, consenting arbiters,  
Acquit our deed.

*Lucretia.* Oh, agony of fear! 25  
Would that he yet might live! Even now I heard  
The Legate's followers whisper as they passed  
They had a warrant for his instant death.  
All was prepared by unforbidden means  
Which we must pay so dearly, having done. 30  
Even now they search the tower, and find the body;  
Now they suspect the truth; now they consult  
Before they come to tax us with the fact;  
O, horrible, 'tis all discovered!

*Beatrice.* Mother, 35  
What is done wisely, is done well. Be bold  
As thou art just. 'Tis like a truant child  
To fear that others know what thou hast done,  
Even from thine own strong consciousness, and thus  
Write on unsteady eyes and altered cheeks  
All thou wouldst hide. Be faithful to thyself, 40  
And fear no other witness but thy fear.  
For if, as cannot be, some circumstance  
Should rise in accusation, we can blind  
Suspicion with such cheap astonishment,  
Or overbear it with such guiltless pride, 45  
As murderers cannot feign. The deed is done,  
And what may follow now regards not me.  
I am as universal as the light;  
Free as the earth-surrounding air; as firm  
As the world's centre. Consequence, to me, 50  
Is as the wind which strikes the solid rock  
But shakes it not. [*A cry within and tumult.*]

*Voices.* Murder! Murder! Murder!

*Enter* BERNARDO and SAVELLA.

*Savella (to his followers).* Go search the castle round; sound  
the alarm;  
Look to the gates that none escape!

- Beatrice.* What now? 54  
*Bernardo.* I know not what to say . . . my father's dead.  
*Beatrice.* How; dead! he only sleeps; you mistake, brother.  
 His sleep is very calm, very like death;  
 'Tis wonderful how well a tyrant sleeps.  
 He is not dead?  
*Bernardo.* Dead; murdered.  
*Lucretia (with extreme agitation).* Oh no, no,  
 He is not murdered though he may be dead; 60  
 I have alone the keys of those apartments.  
*Savella.* Ha! Is it so?  
*Beatrice.* My Lord, I pray excuse us;  
 We will retire; my mother is not well:  
 She seems quite overcome with this strange horror.  
 [Exeunt LUCRETIA and BEATRICE.  
*Savella.* Can you suspect who may have murdered him? 65  
*Bernardo.* I know not what to think.  
*Savella.* Can you name any  
 Who had an interest in his death?  
*Bernardo.* Alas!  
 I can name none who had not, and those most  
 Who most lament that such a deed is done;  
 My mother, and my sister, and myself. 70  
*Savella.* 'Tis strange! There were clear marks of violence.  
 I found the old man's body in the moonlight  
 Hanging beneath the window of his chamber,  
 Among the branches of a pine: he could not  
 Have fallen there, for all his limbs lay heaped 75  
 And effortless; 'tis true there was no blood . . .  
 Favour me, Sir; it much imports your house  
 That all should be made clear; to tell the ladies  
 That I request their presence.  
 [Exit BERNARDO.
- Enter GUARDS bringing in MARZIO.*
- Guard.* We have one. 80  
*Officer.* My Lord, we found this ruffian and another  
 Lurking among the rocks; there is no doubt  
 But that they are the murderers of Count Cenci:  
 Each had a bag of coin; this fellow wore  
 A gold-inwoven robe, which shining bright  
 Under the dark rocks to the glimmering moon 85  
 Betrayed them to our notice: the other fell  
 Desperately fighting.  
*Savella.* What does he confess?  
*Officer.* He keeps firm silence; but these lines found on him  
 May speak.

*Savella.* Their language is at least sincere. [*Reads.*  
*'To the Lady Beatrice.*

*'That the atonement of what my nature sickens to conjecture  
 may soon arrive, I send thee, at thy brother's desire, those who will  
 speak and do more than I dare write . . .*

*'Thy devoted servant, Orsino.'*

*Enter* LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and BERNARDO.

Knowest thou this writing, Lady?

*Beatrice.* No.

*Savella.* Nor thou? 95

*Lucretia.* (*Her conduct throughout the scene is marked by extreme agitation.*) Where was it found? What is it? It should  
 be

Orsino's hand! It speaks of that strange horror  
 Which never yet found utterance, but which made  
 Between that hapless child and her dead father  
 A gulf of obscure hatred.

*Savella.* Is it so? 100

Is it true, Lady, that thy father did  
 Such outrages as to awaken in thee  
 Unfilial hate?

*Beatrice.* Not hate, 'twas more than hate:  
 This is most true, yet wherefore question me?

*Savella.* There is a deed demanding question done; 105  
 Thou hast a secret which will answer not.

*Beatrice.* What sayest? My Lord, your words are bold and rash.

*Savella.* I do arrest all present in the name  
 Of the Pope's Holiness. You must to Rome.

*Lucretia.* O, not to Rome! Indeed we are not guilty. 110

*Beatrice.* Guilty! Who dares talk of guilt? My Lord,  
 I am more innocent of parricide  
 Than is a child born fatherless . . . Dear mother,  
 Your gentleness and patience are no shield  
 For this keen-judging world, this two-edged lie, 115  
 Which seems, but is not. What! will human laws,  
 Rather will ye who are their ministers,  
 Bar all access to retribution first,  
 And then, when Heaven doth interpose to do  
 What ye neglect, arming familiar things 120  
 To the redress of an unwonted crime,  
 Make ye the victims who demanded it  
 Culprits? 'Tis ye are culprits! That poor wretch  
 Who stands so pale, and trembling, and amazed,  
 If it be true he murdered Cenci, was 125  
 A sword in the right hand of justest God.  
 Wherefore should I have wielded it? Unless

The crimes which mortal tongue dare never name  
God therefore scruples to avenge.

*Savella.*

You own

That you desired his death?

*Beatrice.*

It would have been

130

A crime no less than his, if for one moment

That fierce desire had faded in my heart.

'Tis true I did believe, and hope, and pray,

Ay, I even knew . . . for God is wise and just,

That some strange sudden death hung over him.

135

'Tis true that this did happen, and most true

There was no other rest for me on earth,

No other hope in Heaven . . . now what of this?

*Savella.* Strange thoughts beget strange deeds; and here are both:  
I judge thee not.

*Beatrice.*

And yet, if you arrest me,

140

You are the judge and executioner

Of that which is the life of life: the breath

Of accusation kills an innocent name,

And leaves for lame acquittal the poor life

Which is a mask without it. 'Tis most false

145

That I am guilty of foul parricide;

Although I must rejoice, for justest cause,

That other hands have sent my father's soul

To ask the mercy he denied to me.

Now leave us free; stain not a noble house

150

With vague surmises of rejected crime;

Add to our sufferings and your own neglect

No heavier sum: let them have been enough:

Leave us the wreck we have.

*Savella.*

I dare not, Lady.

I pray that you prepare yourselves for Rome:

155

There the Pope's further pleasure will be known.

*Lucretia.* O, not to Rome! O, take us not to Rome!

*Beatrice.* Why not to Rome, dear mother? There as here

Our innocence is as an armèd heel

To trample accusation. God is there

160

As here, and with His shadow ever clothes

The innocent, the injured and the weak;

And such are we. Cheer up, dear Lady, lean

On me; collect your wandering thoughts. My Lord,

As soon as you have taken some refreshment,

165

And had all such examinations made

Upon the spot, as may be necessary

To the full understanding of this matter,

We shall be ready. Mother; will you come?

*Lucretia.* Ha! they will bind us to the rack, and wrest

Self-accusation from our agony! 171  
 Will Giacomo be there? Orsino? Marzio?  
 All present; all confronted; all demanding  
 Each from the other's countenance the thing  
 Which is in every heart! O, misery! 175

[*She faints, and is borne out.*]

*Savella.* She faints: an ill appearance this.

*Beatrice.*

My Lord,

She knows not yet the uses of the world.  
 She fears that power is as a beast which grasps  
 And loosens not: a snake whose look transmutes  
 All things to guilt which is its nutriment. 180  
 She cannot know how well the supine slaves  
 Of blind authority read the truth of things  
 When written on a brow of guilelessness:  
 She sees not yet triumphant Innocence  
 Stand at the judgement-seat of mortal man, 185  
 A judge and an accuser of the wrong  
 Which drags it there. Prepare yourself, my Lord;  
 Our suite will join yours in the court below. [*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

## ACT V

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in ORSINO'S Palace. Enter ORSINO and GIACOMO.*

*Giacomo.* Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end?  
 O, that the vain remorse which must chastise  
 Crimes done, had but as loud a voice to warn  
 As its keen sting is mortal to avenge!  
 O, that the hour when present had cast off 5  
 The mantle of its mystery, and shown  
 The ghastly form with which it now returns  
 When its scared game is roused, cheering the hounds  
 Of conscience to their prey! Alas! Alas!  
 It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed, 10  
 To kill an old and hoary-headed father.

*Orsino.* It has turned out unluckily, in truth.

*Giacomo.* To violate the sacred doors of sleep;  
 To cheat kind Nature of the placid death  
 Which she prepares for overwearied age; 15  
 To drag from Heaven an unrepentant soul  
 Which might have quenched in reconciling prayers  
 A life of burning crimes . . .

*Orsino.*

You cannot say

I urged you to the deed.

*Giacomo.* O, had I never  
Found in thy smooth and ready countenance 20  
The mirror of my darkest thoughts; hadst thou  
Never with hints and questions made me look  
Upon the monster of my thought, until  
It grew familiar to desire . . .

*Orsino.* 'Tis thus  
Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts 25  
Upon the abettors of their own resolve;  
Or anything but their weak, guilty selves.  
And yet, confess the truth, it is the peril  
In which you stand that gives you this pale sickness  
Of penitence; confess 'tis fear disguised 30  
From its own shame that takes the mantle now  
Of thin remorse. What if we yet were safe?

*Giacomo.* How can that be? Already Beatrice,  
Lucretia and the murderer are in prison.  
I doubt not officers are, whilst we speak, 35  
Sent to arrest us.

*Orsino.* I have all prepared  
For instant flight. We can escape even now,  
So we take fleet occasion by the hair.

*Giacomo.* Rather expire in tortures, as I may.  
What! will you cast by self-accusing flight 40  
Assured conviction upon Beatrice?  
She, who alone in this unnatural work,  
Stands like God's angel ministered upon  
By fiends; avenging such a nameless wrong  
As turns black parricide to piety; 45  
Whilst we for basest ends . . . I fear, Orsino,  
While I consider all your words and looks,  
Comparing them with your proposal now,  
That you must be a villain. For what end  
Could you engage in such a perilous crime, 50  
Training me on with hints, and signs, and smiles,  
Even to this gulf? Thou art no liar? No,  
Thou art a lie! Traitor and murderer!  
Coward and slave! But, no, defend thyself;  
Let the sword speak what the indignant tongue 55  
Disdains to brand thee with.

*Orsino.* Put up your weapon.  
Is it the desperation of your fear  
Makes you thus rash and sudden with a friend,  
Now ruined for your sake? If honest anger  
Have moved you, know, that what I just proposed 60

[Drawing.  
55

Was but to try you. As for me, I think,  
 Thankless affection led me to this point,  
 From which, if my firm temper could repent,  
 I cannot now recede. Even whilst we speak  
 The ministers of justice wait below: 65  
 They grant me these brief moments. Now if you  
 Have any word of melancholy comfort  
 To speak to your pale wife, 'twere best to pass  
 Out at the postern, and avoid them so.

*Giacomo.* O, generous friend! How canst thou pardon me?  
 Would that my life could purchase thine!

*Orsino.* That wish 71  
 Now comes a day too late. Haste; fare thee well!  
 Hear'st thou not steps along the corridor?

[*Exit GIACOMO.*

I'm sorry for it; but the guards are waiting  
 At his own gate, and such was my contrivance 75  
 That I might rid me both of him and them  
 I thought to act a solemn comedy  
 Upon the painted scene of this new world,  
 And to attain my own peculiar ends  
 By some such plot of mingled good and ill 80  
 As others weave; but there arose a Power  
 Which grasped and snapped the threads of my device  
 And turned it to a net of ruin . . . Ha! [*A shout is heard.*  
 Is that my name I hear proclaimed abroad?  
 But I will pass, wrapped in a vile disguise; 85  
 Rags on my back, and a false innocence  
 Upon my face, through the misdeeming crowd  
 Which judges by what seems. 'Tis easy then  
 For a new name and for a country new,  
 And a new life, fashioned on old desires, 90  
 To change the honours of abandoned Rome.  
 And these must be the masks of that within,  
 Which must remain unaltered . . . Oh, I fear  
 That what is past will never let me rest!  
 Why, when none else is conscious, but myself, 95  
 Of my misdeeds, should my own heart's contempt  
 Trouble me? Have I not the power to fly  
 My own reproaches? Shall I be the slave  
 Of . . . what? A word? which those of this false world  
 Employ against each other, not themselves; 100  
 As men wear daggers not for self-offence.  
 But if I am mistaken, where shall I  
 Find the disguise to hide me from myself,  
 As now I skulk from every other eye?

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Hall of Justice. CAMILLO, JUDGES, &c., are discovered seated; MARZIO is led in.*

*First Judge.* Accused, do you persist in your denial?

I ask you, are you innocent, or guilty?

I demand who were the participators

In your offence? Speak truth and the whole truth.

*Marzio.* My God! I did not kill him; I know nothing; 5

Olimpio sold the robe to me from which

You would infer my guilt.

*Second Judge.* Away with him!

*First Judge.* Dare you, with lips yet white from the rack's kiss

Speak false? Is it so soft a questioner,

That you would bandy lover's talk with it 10

Till it wind out your life and soul? Away!

*Marzio.* Spare me! O, spare! I will confess.

*First Judge.*

Then speak.

*Marzio.* I strangled him in his sleep.

*First Judge.*

Who urged you to it?

*Marzio.* His own son Giacomo, and the young prelate 15

Orsino sent me to Petrella; there

The ladies Beatrice and Lucretia

Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I

And my companion forthwith murdered him.

Now let me die.

*First Judge.* This sounds as bad as truth. Guards, there,

Lead forth the prisoner!

*Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, guarded.*

Look upon this man; 20

When did you see him last?

*Beatrice.*

We never saw him.

*Marzio.* You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.

*Beatrice.* I know thee! How? where? when?

*Marzio.*

You know 'twas I

Whom you did urge with menaces and bribes

To kill your father. When the thing was done 25

You clothed me in a robe of woven gold

And bade me thrive: how I have thriven, you see.

You, my Lord Giacomo, Lady Lucretia,

You know that what I speak is true.

[*BEATRICE advances towards him; he covers his face, and shrinks back.*

Oh, dart

The terrible resentment of those eyes 30

On the dead earth! Turn them away from me!

They wound: 'twas torture forced the truth. My Lords,



Having said this let me be led to death.

*Beatrice.* Poor wretch, I pity thee: yet stay awhile.

*Camillo.* Guards, lead him not away.

*Beatrice.*

Cardinal Camillo,

35

You have a good repute for gentleness

And wisdom: can it be that you sit here

To countenance a wicked farce like this?

When some obscure and trembling slave is dragged

From sufferings which might shake the sternest heart

40

And bade to answer, not as he believes,

But as those may suspect or do desire

Whose questions thence suggest their own reply:

And that in peril of such hideous torments

As merciful God spares even the damned. Speak now

45

The thing you surely know, which is that you,

If your fine frame were stretched upon that wheel,

And you were told: 'Confess that you did poison

Your little nephew; that fair blue-eyed child

Who was the lodestar of your life:'—and though

50

All see, since his most swift and piteous death,

That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,

And all the things hoped for or done therein

Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief,

Yet you would say, 'I confess anything:'

55

And beg from your tormentors, like that slave,

The refuge of dishonourable death.

I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert

My innocence.

*Camillo (much moved).* What shall we think, my Lords?

Shame on these tears! I thought the heart was frozen

60

Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul

That she is guiltless.

*Judge.*

Yet she must be tortured.

*Camillo.* I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew

(If he now lived he would be just her age;

His hair, too, was her colour, and his eyes

65

Like hers in shape, but blue and not so deep)

As that most perfect image of God's love

That ever came sorrowing upon the earth.

She is as pure as speechless infancy!

*Judge.* Well, be her purity on your head, my Lord,

70

If you forbid the rack. His Holiness

Enjoined us to pursue this monstrous crime

By the severest forms of law; nay, even

To stretch a point against the criminals.

The prisoners stand accused of parricide

75

Upon such evidence as justifies  
Torture.

*Beatrice.* What evidence? This man's?

*Judge.*

Even so.

*Beatrice (to MARZIO).* Come near. And who art thou thus chosen  
forth

Out of the multitude of living men  
To kill the innocent?

*Marzio.* I am Marzio,

80

Thy father's vassal.

*Beatrice.* Fix thine eyes on mine;

Answer to what I ask.

[*Turning to the JUDGES.*

I prithee mark  
His countenance: unlike bold calumny  
Which sometimes dares not speak the thing it looks,  
He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends  
His gaze on the blind earth.

85

(*To MARZIO.*)

What! wilt thou say

That I did murder my own father?

*Marzio.*

Oh!

Spare me! My brain swims round . . . I cannot speak . . .

It was that horrid torture forced the truth.

Take me away! Let her not look on me!

90

I am a guilty miserable wretch;

I have said all I know; now, let me die!

*Beatrice.* My Lords, if by my nature I had been

So stern, as to have planned the crime alleged,

Which your suspicions dictate to this slave,

95

And the rack makes him utter, do you think

I should have left this two-edged instrument

Of my misdeed; this man, this bloody knife

With my own name engraven on the hilt,

Lying unsheathed amid a world of foes,

100

For my own death? That with such horrible need

For deepest silence, I should have neglected

So trivial a precaution, as the making

His tomb the keeper of a secret written

On a thief's memory? What is his poor life?

105

What are a thousand lives? A parricide

Had trampled them like dust; and, see, he lives!

(*Turning to MARZIO.*) And thou . . .

*Marzio.*

Oh, spare me! Speak to me no more!

That stern yet piteous look, those solemn tones,

Wound worse than torture.

(*To the JUDGES.*)

I have told it all;

110

For pity's sake lead me away to death.

*Camillo.* Guards, lead him nearer the Lady Beatrice,

He shrinks from her regard like autumn's leaf  
From the keen breath of the serenest north.

*Beatrice.* O thou who tremblest on the giddy verge 115

Of life and death, pause ere thou answerest me;  
So mayst thou answer God with less dismay:

What evil have we done thee? I, alas!

Have lived but on this earth a few sad years,  
And so my lot was ordered, that a father 120

First turned the moments of awakening life  
To drops, each poisoning youth's sweet hope; and then

stabbed with one blow my everlasting soul;  
And my untainted fame; and even that peace 125

Which sleeps within the core of the heart's heart;

But the wound was not mortal; so my hate

Became the only worship I could lift

To our great father, who in pity and love,  
Armed thee, as thou dost say, to cut him off; 130

And thus his wrong becomes my accusation;

And art thou the accuser? If thou hopest

Mercy in heaven, show justice upon earth:

Worse than a bloody hand is a hard heart.

If thou hast done murders, made thy life's path  
Over the trampled laws of God and man, 135

Rush not before thy Judge, and say: 'My maker,

I have done this and more; for there was one

Who was most pure and innocent on earth;

And because she endured what never any  
Guilty or innocent endured before: 140

Because her wrongs could not be told, not thought;

Because thy hand at length did rescue her;

I with my words killed her and all her kin.'

Think, I adjure you, what it is to slay  
The reverence living in the minds of men 145

Towards our ancient house, and stainless fame!

Think what it is to strangle infant pity,

Cradled in the belief of guileless looks,

Till it become a crime to suffer. Think  
What 'tis to blot with infamy and blood 150

All that which shows like innocence, and is,

Hear me, great God! I swear, most innocent,

So that the world lose all discrimination

Between the sly, fierce, wild regard of guilt,  
And that which now compels thee to reply 155

To what I ask: Am I or am I not

A parricide?

*Marzio.* Thou art not!

*Judge.* What is this?

*Marzio.* I here declare those whom I did accuse  
Are innocent. 'Tis I alone am guilty.

*Judge.* Drag him away to torments; let them be 160  
Subtle and long drawn out, to tear the folds  
Of the heart's inmost cell. Unbind him not  
Till he confess.

*Marzio.* Torture me as ye will:  
A keener pang has wrung a higher truth  
From my last breath. She is most innocent! 165  
Bloodhounds, not men, glut yourselves well with me;  
I will not give you that fine piece of nature  
To rend and ruin.

[*Exit MARZIO, guarded.*]

*Camillo.* What say ye now, my Lords?

*Judge.* Let tortures strain the truth till it be white  
As snow thrice sifted by the frozen wind. 170

*Camillo.* Yet stained with blood.

*Judge (to BEATRICE.)* Know you this paper, Lady?

*Beatrice.* Entrap me not with questions. Who stands here  
As my accuser? Ha! wilt thou be he,  
Who art my judge? Accuser, witness, judge,  
What, all in one? Here is Orsino's name; 175  
Where is Orsino? Let his eye meet mine.  
What means this scrawl? Alas! ye know not what,  
And therefore on the chance that it may be  
Some evil, will ye kill us?

*Enter an Officer.*

*Officer.* Marzio's dead.

*Judge.* What did he say?

*Officer.* Nothing. As soon as we 180  
Had bound him on the wheel, he smiled on us,  
As one who baffles a deep adversary;  
And holding his breath, died.

*Judge.* There remains nothing  
But to apply the question to those prisoners,  
Who yet remain stubborn.

*Camillo.* I overrule 185  
Further proceedings, and in the behalf  
Of these most innocent and noble persons  
Will use my interest with the Holy Father.

*Judge.* Let the Pope's pleasure then be done. Meanwhile  
Conduct these culprits each to separate cells; 190  
And be the engines ready: for this night  
If the Pope's resolution be as grave,  
Pious, and just as once, I'll wring the truth  
Out of those nerves and sinews, groan by groan. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The Cell of a Prison. BEATRICE is discovered asleep on a couch. Enter BERNARDO.*

*Bernardo.* How gently slumber rests upon her face,  
Like the last thoughts of some day sweetly spent  
Closing in night and dreams, and so prolonged.  
After such torments as she bore last night,  
How light and soft her breathing comes. Ay me! 5  
Methinks that I shall never sleep again.  
But I must shake the heavenly dew of rest  
From this sweet folded flower, thus . . . wake! awake!  
What, sister, canst thou sleep?

*Beatrice (awaking).* I was just dreaming  
That we were all in Paradise. Thou knowest 10  
This cell seems like a kind of Paradise  
After our father's presence.

*Bernardo.* Dear, dear sister.  
Would that thy dream were not a dream! O God!  
How shall I tell?

*Beatrice.* What wouldst thou tell, sweet brother?  
*Bernardo.* Look not so calm and happy, or even whilst 15  
I stand considering what I have to say  
My heart will break.

*Beatrice.* See now, thou mak'st me weep:  
How very friendless thou wouldst be, dear child,  
If I were dead. Say what thou hast to say.

*Bernardo.* They have confessed; they could endure no more  
The tortures . . .

*Beatrice.* Ha! What was there to confess? 21  
They must have told some weak and wicked lie  
To flatter their tormentors. Have they said  
That they were guilty? O white innocence,  
That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide 25  
Thine awful and serenest countenance  
From those who know thee not!

*Enter JUDGE with LUCRETIA and GIACOMO, guarded.*

Ignoble hearts!  
For some brief spasms of pain, which are at least  
As mortal as the limbs through which they pass,  
Are centuries of high splendour laid in dust? 30  
And that eternal honour which should live  
Sunlike, above the reek of mortal fame,  
Changed to a mockery and a byword? What!  
Will you give up these bodies to be dragged  
At horses' heels, so that our hair should sweep 35  
The footsteps of the vain and senseless crowd,

Who, that they may make our calamity  
 Their worship and their spectacle, will leave  
 The churches and the theatres as void  
 As their own hearts? Shall the light multitude 40  
 Fling, at their choice, curses or faded pity,  
 Sad funeral flowers to deck a living corpse,  
 Upon us as we pass to pass away,  
 And leave . . . what memory of our having been?  
 Infamy, blood, terror, despair? O thou, 45  
 Who wert a mother to the parentless,  
 Kill not thy child! Let not her wrongs kill thee!  
 Brother, lie down with me upon the rack,  
 And let us each be silent as a corpse;  
 It soon will be as soft as any grave. 50  
 'Tis but the falsehood it can wring from fear  
 Makes the rack cruel.

*Giacomo.* They will tear the truth  
 Even from thee at last, those cruel pains:  
 For pity's sake say thou art guilty now.

*Lucretia.* Oh, speak the truth! Let us all quickly die; 55  
 And after death, God is our judge, not they;  
 He will have mercy on us.

*Bernardo.* If indeed  
 It can be true, say so, dear sister mine;  
 And then the Pope will surely pardon you,  
 And all be well.

*Judge.* Confess, or I will warp 60  
 Your limbs with such keen tortures . . .

*Beatrice.* Tortures! Turn  
 The rack henceforth into a spinning-wheel!  
 Torture your dog, that he may tell when last  
 He lapped the blood his master shed . . . not me!  
 My pangs are of the mind, and of the heart, 65  
 And of the soul; ay, of the inmost soul,  
 Which weeps within tears as of burning gall  
 To see, in this ill world where none are true,  
 My kindred false to their deserted selves.  
 And with considering all the wretched life 70  
 Which I have lived, and its now wretched end,  
 And the small justice shown by Heaven and Earth  
 To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art,  
 And what slaves these; and what a world we make,  
 The oppressor and the oppressed . . . such pangs compel  
 My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me? 76

*Judge.* Art thou not guilty of thy father's death?

*Beatrice.* Or wilt thou rather tax high-judging God  
 That He permitted such an act as that

Which I have suffered, and which He beheld;  
 Made it unutterable, and took from it  
 All refuge, all revenge, all consequence,  
 But that which thou hast called my father's death?  
 Which is or is not what men call a crime,  
 Which either I have done, or have not done;  
 Say what ye will. I shall deny no more.  
 If ye desire it thus, thus let it be,  
 And so an end of all. Now do your will;  
 No other pains shall force another word.  
*Judge.* She is convicted, but has not confessed.  
 Be it enough. Until their final sentence  
 Let none have converse with them. You, young Lord,  
 Linger not here!  
*Beatrice.* Oh, tear him not away!  
*Judge.* Guards, do your duty.  
*Bernardo* (*embracing BEATRICE*). Oh! would ye divide  
 Body from soul?  
*Officer.* That is the headsman's business.  
 [*Exeunt all but LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO.*]  
*Giacomo.* Have I confessed? Is it all over now?  
 No hope! No refuge! O weak, wicked tongue  
 Which hast destroyed me, would that thou hadst been  
 Cut out and thrown to dogs first! To have killed  
 My father first, and then betrayed my sister;  
 Ay, thee! the one thing innocent and pure  
 In this black guilty world, to that which I  
 So well deserve! My wife! my little ones!  
 Destitute, helpless, and I . . . Father! God!  
 Canst Thou forgive even the unforgiving,  
 When their full hearts break thus, thus! . . .  
 [*Covers his face and weeps.*]  
*Lucretia.* O my child!  
 To what a dreadful end are we all come!  
 Why did I yield? Why did I not sustain  
 Those torments? Oh, that I were all dissolved  
 Into these fast and unavailing tears,  
 Which flow and feel not!  
*Beatrice.* What 'twas weak to do,  
 'Tis weaker to lament, once being done;  
 Take cheer! The God who knew my wrong, and made  
 Our speedy act the angel of His wrath,  
 Seems, and but seems, to have abandoned us.  
 Let us not think that we shall die for this.  
 Brother, sit near me; give me your firm hand,  
 You had a manly heart. Bear up! Bear up!  
 O dearest Lady, put your gentle head

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Upon my lap, and try to sleep awhile: 120  
 Your eyes look pale, hollow and overworn,  
 With heaviness of watching and slow grief.  
 Come, I will sing you some low, sleepy tune,  
 Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing, 125  
 Some outworn and unused monotony,  
 Such as our country gossips sing and spin,  
 Till they almost forget they live: lie down!  
 So, that will do. Have I forgot the words?  
 Faith! They are sadder than I thought they were.

## SONG

False friend, wilt thou smile or weep 130  
 When my life is laid asleep?  
 Little cares for a smile or a tear,  
 The clay-cold corpse upon the bier!  
 Farewell! Heigho!  
 What is this whispers low? 135  
 (There is a snake in thy smile, my dear;  
 And bitter poison within thy tear.)  
 Sweet sleep, were death like to thee,  
 Or if thou couldst mortal be,  
 I would close these eyes of pain; 140  
 When to wake? Never again.  
 O World! Farewell!  
 Listen to the passing bell!  
 It says, thou and I must part, 144  
 With a light and a heavy heart. [The scene closes.

SCENE IV.—*A Hall of the Prison. Enter CAMILLO and BERNARDO.*

*Camillo.* The Pope is stern; not to be moved or bent.  
 He looked as calm and keen as is the engine  
 Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself  
 From aught that it inflicts; a marble form,  
 A rite, a law, a custom: not a man. 5  
 He frowned, as if to frown had been the trick  
 Of his machinery, on the advocates  
 Presenting the defences, which he tore  
 And threw behind, muttering with hoarse, harsh voice:  
 'Which among ye defended their old father 10  
 Killed in his sleep?' Then to another: 'Thou  
 Dost this in virtue of thy place; 'tis well.'  
 He turned to me then, looking deprecation,  
 And said these three words, coldly: 'They must die.'  
*Bernardo.* And yet you left him not?



*Camillo.* I urged him still;  
Pleading, as I could guess, the devilish wrong 16  
Which prompted your unnatural parent's death.  
And he replied: 'Paolo Santa Croce  
Murdered his mother yester evening,  
And he is fled. Parricide grows so rife 20  
That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young  
Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs.  
Authority, and power, and hoary hair  
Are grown crimes capital. You are my nephew,  
You come to ask their pardon; stay a moment; 25  
Here is their sentence; never see me more  
Till, to the letter, it be all fulfilled.'

*Bernardo.* O God, not so! I did believe indeed  
That all you said was but sad preparation  
For happy news. Oh, there are words and looks 30  
To bend the sternest purpose! Once I knew them,  
Now I forget them at my dearest need.  
What think you if I seek him out, and bathe  
His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears?  
Importune him with prayers, vexing his brain 35  
With my perpetual cries, until in rage  
He strike me with his pastoral cross, and trample  
Upon my prostrate head, so that my blood  
May stain the senseless dust on which he treads,  
And remorse waken mercy? I will do it! 40  
Oh, wait till I return! [*Rushes out.*]

*Camillo.* Alas! poor boy!  
A wreck-devoted seaman thus might pray  
To the deaf sea.

*Enter* LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, *guarded.*

*Beatrice.* I hardly dare to fear  
That thou bring'st other news than a just pardon.

*Camillo.* May God in heaven be less inexorable 41  
To the Pope's prayers, than he has been to mine.  
Here is the sentence and the warrant.

*Beatrice (wildly).*  
My God! Can it be possible I have  
To die so suddenly? So young to go  
Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground! 50  
To be nailed down into a narrow place;  
To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more  
Blithe voice of living thing; muse not again  
Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost—  
How fearful! to be nothing! Or to be . . . 55

What? Oh, where am I? Let me not go mad!  
 Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts! If there should be  
 No God, no Heaven, no Earth in the void world;  
 The wide, gray, lampless, deep, unpeopled world!  
 If all things then should be . . . my father's spirit, 60  
 His eye, his voice, his touch surrounding me;  
 The atmosphere and breath of my dead life!  
 If sometimes, as a shape more like himself,  
 Even the form which tortured me on earth,  
 Masked in gray hairs and wrinkles, he should come 65  
 And wind me in his hellish arms, and fix  
 His eyes on mine, and drag me down, down, down!  
 For was he not alone omnipotent  
 On Earth, and ever present? Even though dead,  
 Does not his spirit live in all that breathe, 70  
 And work for me and mine still the same ruin,  
 Scorn, pain, despair? Who ever yet returned  
 To teach the laws of Death's untrodden realm?  
 Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now,  
 Oh, whither, whither?

*Lucretia.* Trust in God's sweet love, 75  
 The tender promises of Christ: ere night,  
 Think, we shall be in Paradise.

*Beatrice.* 'Tis past!  
 Whatever comes my heart shall sink no more.  
 And yet, I know not why, your words strike chill:  
 How tedious, false and cold seem all things. I 80  
 Have met with much injustice in this world;  
 No difference has been made by God or man,  
 Or any power moulding my wretched lot,  
 'Twixt good or evil, as regarded me.  
 I am cut off from the only world I know, 85  
 From light, and life, and love, in youth's sweet prime.  
 You do well telling me to trust in God,  
 I hope I do trust in Him. In whom else  
 Can any trust? And yet my heart is cold.

*[During the latter speeches GIACOMO has retired conversing  
 with CAMILLO, who now goes out; GIACOMO advances.]*

*Giacomo.* Know you not, Mother . . . Sister, know you not?  
 Bernardo even now is gone to implore 91  
 The Pope to grant our pardon.

*Lucretia.* Child, perhaps  
 It will be granted. We may all then live  
 To make these woes a tale for distant years:  
 Oh, what a thought! It gushes to my heart 95  
 Like the warm blood.

*Beatrice.* Yet both will soon be cold.  
 Oh, trample out that thought! Worse than despair,  
 Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope:  
 It is the only ill which can find place  
 Upon the giddy, sharp and narrow hour 100  
 Tottering beneath us. Plead with the swift frost  
 That it should spare the eldest flower of spring:  
 Plead with awakening earthquake, o'er whose couch  
 Even now a city stands, strong, fair, and free;  
 Now stench and blackness yawn, like death. Oh, plead 105  
 With famine, or wind-walking Pestilence,  
 Blind lightning, or the deaf sea, not with man!  
 Cruel, cold, formal man; righteous in words,  
 In deeds a Cain. No, Mother, we must die:  
 Since such is the reward of innocent lives; 110  
 Such the alleviation of worst wrongs.  
 And whilst our murderers live, and hard, cold men,  
 Smiling and slow, walk through a world of tears  
 To death as to life's sleep; 'twere just the grave  
 Were some strange joy for us. Come, obscure Death, 115  
 And wind me in thine all-embracing arms!  
 Like a fond mother hide me in thy bosom,  
 And rock me to the sleep from which none wake.  
 Live ye, who live, subject to one another  
 As we were once, who now . . .

BERNARDO *rushes in.*

*Bernardo.* Oh, horrible! 120  
 That tears, that looks, that hope poured forth in prayer,  
 Even till the heart is vacant and despairs,  
 Should all be vain! The ministers of death  
 Are waiting round the doors. I thought I saw  
 Blood on the face of one . . . What if 'twere fancy? 125  
 Soon the heart's blood of all I love on earth  
 Will sprinkle him, and he will wipe it off  
 As if 'twere only rain. O life! O world!  
 Cover me! let me be no more! To see  
 That perfect mirror of pure innocence 130  
 Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good,  
 Shivered to dust! To see thee, Beatrice,  
 Who made all lovely thou didst look upon . . .  
 Thee, light of life . . . dead, dark! while I say, sister,  
 To hear I have no sister; and thou, Mother, 135  
 Whose love was as a bond to all our loves . . .  
 Dead! The sweet bond broken!

*Enter CAMILLO and Guards.*

They come! Let me  
 Kiss those warm lips before their crimson leaves  
 Are blighted . . . white . . . cold. Say farewell, before  
 Death chokes that gentle voice! Oh, let me hear 140  
 You speak!

*Beatrice.* Farewell, my tender brother. Think  
 Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now:  
 And let mild, pitying thoughts lighten for thee  
 Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,  
 But tears and patience. One thing more, my child: 145  
 For thine own sake be constant to the love  
 Thou bearest us; and to the faith that I,  
 Though wrapped in a strange cloud of crime and shame,  
 Lived ever holy and unstained. And though  
 Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name 150  
 Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow  
 For men to point at as they pass, do thou  
 Forbear, and never think a thought unkind  
 Of those, who perhaps love thee in their graves.  
 So mayest thou die as I do; fear and pain 155  
 Being subdued. Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!

*Bernardo.* I cannot say, farewell!

*Camillo.* Oh, Lady Beatrice!

*Beatrice.* Give yourself no unnecessary pain,  
 My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, Mother, tie  
 My girdle for me, and bind up this hair 160  
 In any simple knot; ay, that does well.  
 And yours I see is coming down. How often  
 Have we done this for one another; now  
 We shall not do it any more. My Lord,  
 We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well. 165

THE END.

## NOTE ON THE CENCI, BY MRS. SHELLEY

THE sort of mistake that Shelley made as to the extent of his own genius and powers, which led him deviously at first, but lastly into the direct track that enabled him fully to develop them, is a curious instance of his modesty of feeling, and of the methods which the human mind uses at once to deceive itself, and yet, in its very delusion, to make its way out of error into the path which Nature has marked out as its right one. He often incited me to attempt the writing a tragedy: he conceived that I possessed some dramatic talent, and he was always most earnest and energetic in his exhortations that I should cultivate any talent I

possessed, to the utmost. I entertained a truer estimate of my powers; and above all (though at that time not exactly aware of the fact) I was far too young to have any chance of succeeding, even moderately, in a species of composition that requires a greater scope of experience in, and sympathy with, human passion than could then have fallen to my lot,—or than any perhaps, except Shelley, ever possessed, even at the age of twenty-six, at which he wrote *The Cenci*.

On the other hand, Shelley most erroneously conceived himself to be destitute of this talent. He believed that one of the first requisites was the capacity of forming and following-up a story or plot. He fancied himself to be defective in this portion of imagination: it was that which gave him least pleasure in the writings of others, though he laid great store by it as the proper framework to support the sublimest efforts of poetry. He asserted that he was too metaphysical and abstract, too fond of the theoretical and the ideal, to succeed as a tragedian. It perhaps is not strange that I shared this opinion with himself; for he had hitherto shown no inclination for, nor given any specimen of his powers in framing and supporting the interest of a story, either in prose or verse. Once or twice, when he attempted such, he had speedily thrown it aside, as being even disagreeable to him as an occupation.

The subject he had suggested for a tragedy was Charles I: and he had written to me: 'Remember, remember Charles I. I have been already imagining how you would conduct some scenes. The second volume of *St. Leon* begins with this proud and true sentiment: "There is nothing which the human mind can conceive which it may not execute." Shakespeare was only a human being.' These words were written in 1818, while we were in Lombardy, when he little thought how soon a work of his own would prove a proud comment on the passage he quoted. When in Rome, in 1819, a friend put into our hands the old manuscript account of the story of the Cenci. We visited the Colonna and Doria palaces, where the portraits of Beatrice were to be found; and her beauty cast the reflection of its own grace over her appalling story. Shelley's imagination became strongly excited, and he urged the subject to me as one fitted for a tragedy. More than ever I felt my incompetence; but I entreated him to write it instead; and he began, and proceeded swiftly, urged on by intense sympathy with the sufferings of the human beings whose passions, so long cold in the tomb, he revived, and gifted with poetic language. This tragedy is the only one of his works that he communicated to me during its progress. We talked over the arrangement of the scenes together. I speedily saw the great mistake we had made, and triumphed in the discovery of the new talent brought to light from that mine of wealth (never, alas, through his untimely death, worked to its depths)—his richly gifted mind.

We suffered a severe affliction in Rome by the loss of our eldest child, who was of such beauty and promise as to cause him deservedly to be the idol of our hearts. We left the capital of the world, anxious for a time to escape a spot associated too intimately with his presence and

loss.<sup>1</sup> Some friends of ours were residing in the neighbourhood of Leghorn, and we took a small house, Villa Valsovano, about half-way between the town and Monte Nero, where we remained during the summer. Our villa was situated in the midst of a *podere*; the peasants sang as they worked beneath our windows, during the heats of a very hot season, and in the evening the water-wheel creaked as the process of irrigation went on, and the fireflies flashed from among the myrtle hedges: Nature was bright, sunshiny, and cheerful, or diversified by storms of a majestic terror, such as we had never before witnessed.

At the top of the house there was a sort of terrace. There is often such in Italy, generally roofed: this one was very small, yet not only roofed but glazed. This Shelley made his study; it looked out on a wide prospect of fertile country, and commanded a view of the near sea. The storms that sometimes varied our day showed themselves most picturesquely as they were driven across the ocean; sometimes the dark lurid clouds dipped towards the waves, and became waterspouts that churned up the waters beneath, as they were chased onward and scattered by the tempest. At other times the dazzling sunlight and heat made it almost intolerable to every other; but Shelley basked in both, and his health and spirits revived under their influence. In this airy cell he wrote the principal part of *The Cenci*. He was making a study of Calderon at the time, reading his best tragedies with an accomplished lady living near us, to whom his letter from Leghorn was addressed during the following year. He admired Calderon, both for his poetry and his dramatic genius; but it shows his judgement and originality that, though greatly struck by his first acquaintance with the Spanish poet, none of his peculiarities crept into the composition of *The Cenci*; and there is no trace of his new studies, except in that passage to which he himself alludes as suggested by one in *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*.

Shelley wished *The Cenci* to be acted. He was not a playgoer, being of such fastidious taste that he was easily disgusted by the bad filling-up of the inferior parts. While preparing for our departure from England, however, he saw Miss O'Neil several times. She was then in the zenith of her glory; and Shelley was deeply moved by her impersonation of several parts, and by the graceful sweetness, the intense pathos, and sublime vehemence of passion she displayed. She was often in his thoughts as he wrote: and, when he had finished, he became anxious that his tragedy should be acted, and receive the advantage of having this accomplished actress to fill the part of the heroine. With this view he wrote the following letter to a friend in London:

<sup>1</sup> Such feelings haunted him when, in *The Cenci*, he makes Beatrice speak to Cardinal Camillo of

‘that fair blue-eyed child  
Who was the lodestar of your life:’—

and say—

‘All see, since his most swift and piteous death,  
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,  
And all the things hoped for or done therein  
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief.’

'The object of the present letter is to ask a favour of you. I have written a tragedy on a story well known in Italy, and, in my conception, eminently dramatic. I have taken some pains to make my play fit for representation, and those who have already seen it judge favourably. It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions; I have attended simply to the impartial development of such characters as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a development. I send you a translation of the Italian MS. on which my play is founded; the chief circumstance of which I have touched very delicately; for my principal doubt as to whether it would succeed as an acting play hangs entirely on the question as to whether any such a thing as incest in this shape, however treated, would be admitted on the stage. I think, however, it will form no objection; considering, first, that the facts are matter of history, and, secondly, the peculiar delicacy with which I have treated it.<sup>1</sup>

'I am exceedingly interested in the question of whether this attempt of mine will succeed or not. I am strongly inclined to the affirmative at present; founding my hopes on this—that, as a composition, it is certainly not inferior to any of the modern plays that have been acted, with the exception of *Remorse*; that the interest of the plot is incredibly greater and more real; and that there is nothing beyond what the multitude are contented to believe that they can understand, either in imagery, opinion, or sentiment. I wish to preserve a complete incognito, and can trust to you that, whatever else you do, you will at least favour me on this point. Indeed, this is essential, deeply essential, to its success. After it had been acted, and successfully (could I hope for such a thing), I would own it if I pleased, and use the celebrity it might acquire to my own purposes.

'What I want you to do is to procure for me its presentation at Covent Garden. The principal character, Beatrice, is precisely fitted for Miss O'Neil, and it might even seem to have been written for her (God forbid that I should see her play it—it would tear my nerves to pieces); and in all respects it is fitted only for Covent Garden. The chief male character I confess I should be very unwilling that any one but Kean should play. That is impossible, and I must be contented with an inferior actor.'

The play was accordingly sent to Mr. Harris. He pronounced the subject to be so objectionable that he could not even submit the part to Miss O'Neil for perusal, but expressed his desire that the author would write a tragedy on some other subject, which he would gladly accept. Shelley printed a small edition at Leghorn, to ensure its correctness;

<sup>1</sup> In speaking of his mode of treating this main incident, Shelley said that it might be remarked that, in the course of the play, he had never mentioned expressly Cenci's worst crime. Every one knew what it must be, but it was never imaged in words—the nearest allusion to it being that portion of Cenci's curse beginning—

'That, if she have a child,' etc.

as he was much annoyed by the many mistakes that crept into his text when distance prevented him from correcting the press.

Universal approbation soon stamped *The Cenci* as the best tragedy of modern times. Writing concerning it, Shelley said: 'I have been cautious to avoid the introducing faults of youthful composition; diffuseness, a profusion of inapplicable imagery, vagueness, generality, and, as Hamlet says, *words, words*.' There is nothing that is not purely dramatic throughout; and the character of Beatrice, proceeding, from vehement struggle, to horror, to deadly resolution, and lastly to the elevated dignity of calm suffering, joined to passionate tenderness and pathos, is touched with hues so vivid and so beautiful that the poet seems to have read intimately the secrets of the noble heart imaged in the lovely countenance of the unfortunate girl. The Fifth Act is a masterpiece. It is the finest thing he ever wrote, and may claim proud comparison not only with any contemporary, but preceding, poet. The varying feelings of Beatrice are expressed with passionate, heart-reaching eloquence. Every character has a voice that echoes truth in its tones. It is curious, to one acquainted with the written story, to mark the success with which the poet has inwoven the real incidents of the tragedy into his scenes, and yet, through the power of poetry, has obliterated all that would otherwise have shown too harsh or too hideous in the picture. His success was a double triumph; and often after he was earnestly entreated to write again in a style that commanded popular favour, while it was not less instinct with truth and genius. But the bent of his mind went the other way; and, even when employed on subjects whose interest depended on character and incident, he would start off in another direction, and leave the delineations of human passion, which he could depict in so able a manner, for fantastic creations of his fancy, or the expression of those opinions and sentiments, with regard to human nature and its destiny, a desire to diffuse which was the master passion of his soul.

## THE MASK OF ANARCHY

WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE MASSACRE  
AT MANCHESTER

I

As I lay asleep in Italy  
There came a voice from over the  
Sea,  
And with great power it forth led  
me  
To walk in the visions of Poesy.

II

I met Murder on the way— 5  
He had a mask like Castlereagh—  
Very smooth he looked, yet grim;  
Seven blood-hounds followed him:



## III

All were fat; and well they might  
 Be in admirable plight, 10  
 For one by one, and two by two,  
 He tossed them human hearts to  
 chew  
 Which from his wide cloak he drew.

## IV

Next came Fraud, and he had on,  
 Like Eldon, an ermined gown; 15  
 His big tears, for he wept well,  
 Turned to mill-stones as they fell.

## V

And the little children, who  
 Round his feet played to and fro,  
 Thinking every tear a gem, 20  
 Had their brains knocked out by  
 them.

## VI

Clothed with the Bible, as with  
 light,  
 And the shadows of the night,  
 Like Sidmouth, next, Hypocrisy  
 On a crocodile rode by. 25

## VII

And many more destructions  
 played  
 In this ghastly masquerade,  
 All disguised, even to the eyes,  
 Like Bishops, lawyers, peers, or  
 spies.

## VIII

Last came Anarchy: he rode 30  
 On a white horse, splashed with  
 blood;  
 He was pale even to the lips,  
 Like Death in the Apocalypse.

## IX

And he wore a kingly crown;  
 And in his grasp a sceptre shone; 35  
 On his brow this mark I saw—  
 'I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW!'

## X

With a pace stately and fast,  
 Over English land he passed,  
 Trampling to a mire of blood 40  
 The adoring multitude.

## XI

And a mighty troop around,  
 With their trampling shook the  
 ground,  
 Waving each a bloody sword,  
 For the service of their Lord. 45

## XII

And with glorious triumph, they  
 Rode through England proud and  
 gay,  
 Drunk as with intoxication  
 Of the wine of desolation.

## XIII

O'er fields and towns, from sea to  
 sea, 50  
 Passed the Pageant swift and free,  
 Tearing up, and trampling down;  
 Till they came to London town.

## XIV

And each dweller, panic-stricken,  
 Felt his heart with terror sicken 55  
 Hearing the tempestuous cry  
 Of the triumph of Anarchy.

## XV

For with pomp to meet him came,  
 Clothed in arms like blood and  
 flame,  
 The hired murderers, who did  
 sing 60  
 'Thou art God, and Law, and King.

## XVI

'We have waited, weak and lone  
 For thy coming, Mighty One!  
 Our purses are empty, our swords  
 are cold,  
 Give us glory, and blood, and  
 gold.' 63

## XVII

Lawyers and priests, a motley  
crowd,  
To the earth their pale brows  
bowed;  
Like a bad prayer not over loud,  
Whispering—'Thou art Law and  
God.'—

## XVIII

Then all cried with one accord, 70  
'Thou art King, and God, and  
Lord;  
Anarchy, to thee we bow,  
Be thy name made holy now!'

## XIX

And Anarchy, the Skeleton,  
Bowed and grinned to every one, 75  
As well as if his education  
Had cost ten millions to the nation.

## XX

For he knew the Palaces  
Of our Kings were rightly his;  
His the sceptre, crown, and globe,  
And the gold-inwoven robe. 81

## XXI

So he sent his slaves before  
To seize upon the Bank and Tower,  
And was proceeding with intent  
To meet his pensioned Parlia-  
ment 85

## XXII

When one fled past, a maniac maid,  
And her name was Hope, she said:  
But she looked more like Despair,  
And she cried out in the air:

## XXIII

'My father Time is weak and  
gray 90  
With waiting for a better day;  
See how idiot-like he stands,  
Fumbling with his palsied hands!'

## XXIV

'He has had child after child,  
And the dust of death is piled 95  
Over every one but me—  
Misery, oh, Misery!'

## XXV

Then she lay down in the street,  
Right before the horses' feet,  
Expecting, with a patient eye, 100  
Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy.

## XXVI

When between her and her foes  
A mist, a light, an image rose,  
Small at first, and weak, and frail  
Like the vapour of a vale: 105

## XXVII

Till as clouds grow on the blast,  
Like tower-crowned giants striding  
fast,  
And glare with lightnings as they  
fly,  
And speak in thunder to the sky,

## XXVIII

It grew—a Shape arrayed in mail  
Brighter than the viper's scale, 111  
And upborne on wings whose grain  
Was as the light of sunny rain.

## XXIX

On its helm, seen far away,  
A planet, like the Morning's, lay;  
And those plumes its light rained  
through 116  
Like a shower of crimson dew.

## XXX

With step as soft as wind it passed  
O'er the heads of men—so fast  
That they knew the presence there,  
And looked,—but all was empty  
air. 121

## XXXI

As flowers beneath May's footstep  
waken,  
As stars from Night's loose hair  
are shaken,  
As waves arise when loud winds  
call,  
Thoughts sprung where'er that step  
did fall. 125

## XXXII

And the prostrate multitude  
Looked—and ankle-deep in blood,  
Hope, that maiden most serene,  
Was walking with a quiet mien:

## XXXIII

And Anarchy, the ghastly birth, 130  
Lay dead earth upon the earth;  
The Horse of Death tameless as  
wind  
Fled, and with his hoofs did grind  
To dust the murderers thronged  
behind.

## XXXIV

A rushing light of clouds and splen-  
dour, 135  
A sense awakening and yet tender  
Was heard and felt—and at its  
close  
These words of joy and fear arose

## XXXV

As if their own indignant Earth  
Which gave the sons of England  
birth 140  
Had felt their blood upon her brow,  
And shuddering with a mother's  
throe

## XXXVI

Had turned every drop of blood  
By which her face had been be-  
dewed  
To an accent unwitstood,— 145  
As if her heart had cried aloud:

## XXXVII

'Men of England, heirs of Glory,  
Heroes of unwritten story,  
Nurslings of one mighty Mother,  
Hopes of her, and one another; 150

## XXXVIII

'Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number,  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you—  
Ye are many—they are few. 155

## XXXIX

'What is Freedom?—ye can tell  
That which slavery is, too well—  
For its very name has grown  
To an echo of your own.

## XL

'Tis to work and have such  
pay 160  
As just keeps life from day to day  
In your limbs, as in a cell  
For the tyrants' use to dwell,

## XLI

'So that ye for them are made  
Loom, and plough, and sword, and  
spade, 165  
With or without your own will bent  
To their defence and nourishment.

## XLII

'Tis to see your children weak  
With their mothers pine and peak,  
When the winter winds are bleak,—  
They are dying whilst I speak. 171

## XLIII

'Tis to hunger for such diet  
As the rich man in his riot  
Casts to the fat dogs that lie  
Surfeiting beneath his eye; 175

## XLIV

'Tis to let the Ghost of Gold  
Take from Toil a thousandfold  
More than e'er its substance could  
In the tyrannies of old.

## XLV

'Paper coin—that forgery 180  
Of the title-deeds, which ye  
Hold to something of the worth  
Of the inheritance of Earth.

## XLVI

'Tis to be a slave in soul 185  
And to hold no strong control  
Over your own wills, but be  
All that others make of ye.

## XLVII

'And at length when ye complain  
With a murmur weak and vain  
'Tis to see the Tyrant's crew 190  
Ride over your wives and you—  
Blood is on the grass like dew.

## XLVIII

'Then it is to feel revenge  
Fiercely thirsting to exchange  
Blood for blood—and wrong for 195  
wrong—  
Do not thus when ye are strong.

## XLIX

'Birds find rest, in narrow nest  
When weary of their wingèd quest;  
Beasts find fare, in woody lair 199  
When storm and snow are in the  
air.

## L

'Asses, swine, have litter spread  
And with fitting food are fed;  
All things have a home but one—  
Thou, Oh, Englishman, hast none!

## LI

'This is Slavery—savage men, 205  
Or wild beasts within a den  
Would endure not as ye do—  
But such ills they never knew.

## LII

'What art thou Freedom? O! could 210  
slaves  
Answer from their living graves  
This demand—tyrants would flee  
Like a dream's dim imagery:

## LIII

'Thou art not, as impostors say,  
A shadow soon to pass away,  
A superstition, and a name 215  
Echoing from the cave of Fame.

## LIV

'For the labourer thou art bread,  
And a comely table spread  
From his daily labour come  
In a neat and happy home. 220

## LV

'Thou art clothes, and fire, and  
food  
For the trampled multitude—  
No—in countries that are free  
Such starvation cannot be  
As in England now we see. 225

## LVI

'To the rich thou art a check,  
When his foot is on the neck  
Of his victim, thou dost make  
That he treads upon a snake.

## LVII

'Thou art Justice—ne'er for gold  
May thy righteous laws be sold 231  
As laws are in England—thou  
Shield'st alike the high and low.

## LVIII

'Thou art Wisdom—Freemen never  
Dream that God will damn for ever  
All who think those things untrue  
Of which Priests make such ado. 237

## LIX

'Thou art Peace—never by thee  
Would blood and treasure wasted  
be  
As tyrants wasted them, when  
all 240  
Leagued to quench thy flame in  
Gaul.

## LX

'What if English toil and blood  
Was poured forth, even as a flood?  
It availed, Oh, Liberty,  
To dim, but not extinguish thee.

## LXI

'Thou art Love—the rich have  
kissed 246  
Thy feet, and like him following  
Christ,  
Give their substance to the free  
And through the rough world fol-  
low thee,

## LXII

'Or turn their wealth to arms, and  
make 250  
War for thy belovèd sake  
On wealth, and war, and fraud—  
whence they  
Drew the power which is their  
prey.

## LXIII

'Science, Poetry, and Thought  
Are thy lamps; they make the lot  
Of the dwellers in a cot 256  
So serene, they curse it not.

## LXIV

'Spirit, Patience, Gentleness,  
All that can adorn and bless  
Art thou—let deeds, not words,  
express 260  
Thine exceeding loveliness.

## LXV

'Let a great Assembly be  
Of the fearless and the free  
On some spot of English ground  
Where the plains stretch wide  
around. 265

## LXVI

'Let the blue sky overhead,  
The green earth on which ye tread,  
All that must eternal be  
Witness the solemnity.

## LXVII

'From the corners uttermost 270  
Of the bounds of English coast;  
From every hut, village, and town  
Where those who live and suffer  
moan  
For others' misery or their own,

## LXVIII

'From the workhouse and the  
prison  
Where pale as corpses newly risen,  
Women, children, young and old 277  
Groan for pain, and weep for  
cold—

## LXIX

'From the haunts of daily life  
Where is waged the daily strife 280  
With common wants and common  
cares  
Which sows the human heart with  
tares—

## LXX

'Lastly from the palaces  
Where the murmur of distress  
Echoes, like the distant sound 285  
Of a wind alive around

## LXXI

'Those prison halls of wealth and  
fashion,  
Where some few feel such compas-  
sion  
For those who groan, and toil, and  
wail  
As must make their brethren pale—

## LXXII

'Ye who suffer woes untold, 291  
Or to feel, or to behold  
Your lost country bought and sold  
With a price of blood and gold—

## LXXIII

'Let a vast assembly be, 295  
And with great solemnity  
Declare with measured words that  
ye  
Are, as God has made ye, free—

## LXXIV

'Be your strong and simple words  
Keen to wound as sharpened  
swords,  
And wide as targets let them be, 301  
With their shade to cover ye.

## LXXV

'Let the tyrants pour around  
With a quick and startling sound,  
Like the loosening of a sea, 305  
Troops of armed emblazonry.

## LXXVI

'Let the charged artillery drive  
Till the dead air seems alive  
With the clash of clanging wheels,  
And the tramp of horses' heels. 310

## LXXVII

'Let the fixèd bayonet  
Gleam with sharp desire to wet  
Its bright point in English blood  
Looking keen as one for food.

## LXXVIII

'Let the horsemen's scimitars 315  
Wheel and flash, like sphereless  
stars  
Thirsting to eclipse their burning  
In a sea of death and mourning.

## LXXIX

'Stand ye calm and resolute,  
Like a forest close and mute, 320  
With folded arms and looks which  
are  
Weapons of unvanquished war,

## LXXX

'And let Panic, who outspeeds  
The career of armèd steeds  
Pass, a disregarded shade 325  
Through your phalanx undismayed.

## LXXXI

'Let the laws of your own land,  
Good or ill, between ye stand  
Hand to hand, and foot to foot,  
Arbiters of the dispute, 330

## LXXXII

'The old laws of England—they  
Whose reverend heads with age are  
gray,  
Children of a wiser day;  
And whose solemn voice must be  
Thine own echo—Liberty! 335

## LXXXIII

'On those who first should violate  
Such sacred heralds in their state  
Rest the blood that must ensue,  
And it will not rest on you.

## LXXXIV

'And if then the tyrants dare 340  
Let them ride among you there,  
Slash, and stab, and maim, and  
hew,—  
What they like, that let them do.

## LXXXV

'With folded arms and steady  
eyes,  
And little fear, and less surprise,  
Look upon them as they slay 346  
Till their rage has died away.

## LXXXVI

'Then they will return with shame  
To the place from which they  
came,  
And the blood thus shed will speak  
In hot blushes on their cheek. 351

## LXXXVII

'Every woman in the land  
Will point at them as they stand—  
They will hardly dare to greet  
Their acquaintance in the street. 355

## LXXXVIII

'And the bold, true warriors  
Who have hugged Danger in wars  
Will turn to those who would be  
free,  
Ashamed of such base company.

## LXXXIX

'And that slaughter to the Nation  
Shall steam up like inspiration, 361  
Eloquent, oracular;  
A volcano heard afar.

## XC

'And these words shall then become  
Like Oppression's thundered doom  
Ringing through each heart and  
brain 366  
Heard again—again—again—

## XCI

'Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number—  
Shake your chains to earth like  
dew 370  
Which in sleep had fallen on you—  
Ye are many—they are few.'

## NOTE ON THE MASK OF ANARCHY, BY MRS. SHELLEY

THOUGH Shelley's first eager desire to excite his countrymen to resist openly the oppressions existent during 'the good old times' had faded with early youth, still his warmest sympathies were for the people. He was a republican, and loved a democracy. He looked on all human beings as inheriting an equal right to possess the dearest privileges of our nature; the necessities of life when fairly earned by labour, and intellectual instruction. His hatred of any despotism that looked upon the people as not to be consulted, or protected from want and ignorance, was intense. He was residing near Leghorn, at Villa Valsovano, writing *The Cenci*, when the news of the Manchester Massacre reached us; it roused in him violent emotions of indignation and compassion. The great truth that the many, if accordant and resolute, could control the few, as was shown some years after, made him long to teach his injured countrymen how to resist. Inspired by these feelings, he wrote the *Mask of Anarchy*, which he sent to his friend Leigh Hunt, to be inserted in the *Examiner*, of which he was then the Editor.

'I did not insert it,' Leigh Hunt writes in his valuable and interesting preface to this poem, when he printed it in 1832, 'because I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness of the spirit that walked in this flaming robe of verse.' Days of outrage have passed away, and with them the exasperation that would cause such an appeal to the many to be injurious. Without being aware of them, they at one time acted on his suggestions, and gained the day. But they rose when human life was respected by the Minister in power; such was not the case during the Administration which excited Shelley's abhorrence.

The poem was written for the people, and is therefore in a more popular tone than usual: portions strike as abrupt and unpolished, but many stanzas are all his own. I heard him repeat, and admired, those beginning

'My Father Time is old and gray,'

before I knew to what poem they were to belong. But the most touching passage is that which describes the blessed effects of liberty; it might make a patriot of any man whose heart was not wholly closed against his humbler fellow-creatures.

## PETER BELL THE THIRD

By MICHING MALLECHO, ESQ.

Is it a party in a parlour,  
Crammed just as they on earth were  
crammed,

Some sipping punch—some sipping tea;  
But, as you by their faces see,  
All silent, and all—damned!

*Peter Bell, by W. WORDSWORTH.*

OPHELIA.—What means this, my lord?

HAMLET.—Marry, this is Miching Mallecho; it means mischief.

SHAKESPEARE.

## DEDICATION

TO THOMAS BROWN, ESQ., THE YOUNGER, H.F.

DEAR TOM—Allow me to request you to introduce Mr. Peter Bell to the respectable family of the Fudges. Although he may fall short of those very considerable personages in the more active properties which characterize the Rat and the Apostate, I suspect that even you, their historian, will confess that he surpasses them in the more peculiarly legitimate qualification of intolerable dulness.

You know Mr. Examiner Hunt; well—it was he who presented me to two of the Mr. Bells. My intimacy with the younger Mr. Bell naturally sprung from this introduction to his brothers. And in presenting him to you, I have the satisfaction of being able to assure you that he is considerably the dullest of the three.

There is this particular advantage in an acquaintance with any one of the Peter Bells, that if you know one Peter Bell, you know three Peter Bells; they are not one, but three; not three, but one. An awful mystery,



which, after having caused torrents of blood, and having been hymned by groans enough to deafen the music of the spheres, is at length illustrated to the satisfaction of all parties in the theological world, by the nature of Mr. Peter Bell.

Peter is a polyhedric Peter, or a Peter with many sides. He changes colours like a chameleon, and his coat like a snake. He is a Proteus of a Peter. He was at first sublime, pathetic, impressive, profound; then dull; then prosy and dull; and now dull—oh so very dull! it is an ultra-legitimate dulness.

You will perceive that it is not necessary to consider Hell and the Devil as supernatural machinery. The whole scene of my epic is in 'this world which is'—so Peter informed us before his conversion to *White Obi*—

‘The world of all of us, and where  
We find our happiness, or not at all.’

Let me observe that I have spent six or seven days in composing this sublime piece; the orb of my moonlike genius has made the fourth part of its revolution round the dull earth which you inhabit, driving you mad, while it has retained its calmness and its splendour, and I have been fitting this its last phase ‘to occupy a permanent station in the literature of my country.’

Your works, indeed, dear Tom, sell better; but mine are far superior. The public is no judge; posterity sets all to rights.

Allow me to observe that so much has been written of Peter Bell, that the present history can be considered only, like the *Iliad*, as a continuation of that series of cyclic poems, which have already been candidates for bestowing immortality upon, at the same time that they receive it from, his character and adventures. In this point of view I have violated no rule of syntax in beginning my composition with a conjunction; the full stop which closes the poem continued by me being, like the full stops at the end of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, a full stop of a very qualified import.

Hoping that the immortality which you have given to the Fudges, you will receive from them; and in the firm expectation, that when London shall be an habitation of bitterns; when St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey shall stand, shapeless and nameless ruins, in the midst of an unpeopled marsh; when the piers of Waterloo Bridge shall become the nuclei of islets of reeds and osiers, and cast the jagged shadows of their broken arches on the solitary stream, some transatlantic commentator will be weighing in the scales of some new and now unimagined system of criticism, the respective merits of the Bells and the Fudges, and their historians. I remain, dear Tom, yours sincerely,

MICHING MALLECHO.

*December 1, 1819.*

P.S.—Pray excuse the date of place; so soon as the profits of the publication come in, I mean to hire lodgings in a more respectable street.

## PROLOGUE

PETER BELLS, one, two and three,  
O'er the wide world wandering  
be.—

First, the antenatal Peter,  
Wrapped in weeds of the same  
metre,

The so-long-predestined raiment 5  
Clothed in which to walk his way  
meant

The second Peter; whose ambition  
Is to link the proposition,  
As the mean of two extremes—  
(This was learned from Aldric's  
themes) 10

Shielding from the guilt of schism  
The orthodoxal syllogism;

The First Peter—he who was  
Like the shadow in the glass  
Of the second, yet unripe, 15

His substantial antitype.—  
Then came Peter Bell the Second,  
Who henceforward must be reck-  
oned

The body of a double soul,  
And that portion of the whole 20  
Without which the rest would seem  
Ends of a disjointed dream.—  
And the Third is he who has  
O'er the grave been forced to pass  
To the other side, which is,— 25  
Go and try else,—just like this.

Peter Bell the First was Peter  
Smugger, milder, softer, neater,  
Like the soul before it is  
Born from *that* world into *this*. 30

The next Peter Bell was he,  
Predevote, like you and me,  
To good or evil as may come;  
His was the severer doom,— 35  
For he was an evil Cotter,  
And a polygamic Potter.<sup>1</sup>  
And the last is Peter Bell,  
Damned since our first parents fell,  
Damned eternally to Hell—  
Surely he deserves it well! 40

## PART THE FIRST

## DEATH

## I

AND Peter Bell, when he had been  
With fresh-imported Hell-fire  
warmed,  
Grew serious—from his dress and  
mien  
'Twas very plainly to be seen  
Peter was quite reformed. 5

## II

His eyes turned up, his mouth  
turned down;  
His accent caught a nasal twang;  
He oiled his hair; <sup>2</sup> there might be  
heard  
The grace of God in every word  
Which Peter said or sang. 10

## III

But Peter now grew old, and had  
An ill no doctor could unravel;

<sup>1</sup> The oldest scholiasts read—

A *dodecagamic* Potter.

This is at once more descriptive and more megalophonous,—but the alliteration of the text had captivated the vulgar ear of the herd of later commentators.—  
[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

<sup>2</sup> To those who have not duly appreciated the distinction between *Whale* and *Russia* oil, this attribute might rather seem to belong to the Dandy than the Evangelic. The effect, when to the windward, is indeed so similar, that it requires a subtle naturalist to discriminate the animals. They belong, however, to distinct genera.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

His torments almost drove him  
mad;—  
Some said it was a fever bad—  
Some swore it was the gravel. 15

## IV

His holy friends then came about,  
And with long preaching and  
persuasion  
Convinced the patient that, with-  
out  
The smallest shadow of a doubt,  
He was predestined to damna-  
tion. 20

## V

They said—‘Thy name is Peter  
Bell;  
Thy skin is of a brimstone hue;  
Alive or dead—ay, sick or well—  
The one God made to rhyme with  
hell;  
The other, I think, rhymes with  
you.’ 25

## VI

Then Peter set up such a yell!—  
The nurse, who with some water  
gruel  
Was climbing up the stairs, as well  
As her old legs could climb them—  
fell,  
And broke them both—the fall  
was cruel. 30

## VII

The Parson from the casement lept  
Into the lake of Windermere—  
And many an eel—though no adept  
In God’s right reason for it—  
kept 34  
Gnawing his kidneys half a year.

## VIII

And all the rest rushed through the  
door,

And tumbled over one another,  
And broke their skulls.—Upon the  
floor  
Meanwhile sat Peter Bell, and  
swore,  
And cursed his father and his  
mother; 40

## IX

And raved of God, and sin, and  
death,  
Blaspheming like an infidel;  
And said, that with his clenched  
teeth  
He’d seize the earth from under-  
neath,  
And drag it with him down to  
hell. 45

## X

As he was speaking came a spasm,  
And wrenched his gnashing teeth  
asunder;  
Like one who sees a strange phan-  
tasm  
He lay,—there was a silent  
chasm 49

Between his upper jaw and un-  
der.

## XI

And yellow death lay on his face;  
And a fixed smile that was not  
human  
Told, as I understand the case,  
That he was gone to the wrong  
place:—  
I heard all this from the old  
woman. 55

## XII

Then there came down from Lang-  
dale Pike  
A cloud, with lightning, wind  
and hail;  
It swept over the mountains like  
An ocean,—and I heard it strike  
The woods and crags of Gras-  
mere vale. 60

## XIII

And I saw the black storm come  
 Nearer, minute after minute; 62  
 Its thunder made the cataracts  
 dumb;  
 With hiss, and clash, and hollow  
 hum,  
 It neared as if the Devil was  
 in it. 65

## XIV

The Devil *was* in it:—he had  
 bought  
 Peter for half-a-crown; and  
 when  
 The storm which bore him van-  
 ished, nought  
 That in the house that storm had  
 caught  
 Was ever seen again. 70

## XV

The gaping neighbours came next  
 day—  
 They found all vanished from  
 the shore:  
 The Bible, whence he used to pray,  
 Half scorched under a hen-coop  
 lay;  
 Smashed glass—and nothing  
 more! 75

## PART THE SECOND

## THE DEVIL

## I

THE DEVIL, I safely can aver,  
 Has neither hoof, nor tail, nor  
 sting;  
 Nor is he, as some sages swear,  
 A spirit, neither here nor there,  
 In nothing—yet in everything. 80

## II

He is—what we are; for sometimes  
 The Devil is a gentleman;  
 At others a bard bartering rhymes  
 For sack; a statesman spinning  
 crimes;  
 A swindler, living as he can; 85

## III

A thief, who cometh in the night,  
 With whole boots and net pan-  
 taloons,  
 Like some one whom it were not  
 right  
 To mention;—or the luckless  
 wight  
 From whom he steals nine silver  
 spoons. 90

## IV

But in this case he did appear  
 Like a slop-merchant from Wap-  
 ping,  
 And with smug face, and eye se-  
 vere,  
 On every side did perk and peer 94  
 Till he saw Peter dead or nap-  
 ping.

## V

He had on an upper Benjamin  
 (For he was of the driving  
 schism)  
 In the which he wrapped his skin  
 From the storm he travelled in,  
 For fear of rheumatism. 100

## VI

He called the ghost out of the  
 corse;—  
 It was exceedingly like Peter,—  
 Only its voice was hollow and  
 hoarse—  
 It had a queerish look of course—  
 Its dress too was a little  
 neater. 105

## VII

The Devil knew not his name and  
lot;

Peter knew not that he was  
Bell:

Each had an upper stream of  
thought,  
Which made all seem as it was not;  
Fitting itself to all things  
well. 110

## VIII

Peter thought he had parents dear,  
Bothers, sisters, cousins, cro-  
nies,  
In the fens of Lincolnshire;  
He perhaps had found them there  
Had he gone and boldly shown  
his 115

## IX

Solemn phiz in his own village;  
Where he thought oft when a  
boy  
He'd clomb the orchard walls to  
pillage  
The produce of his neighbour's  
tillage,  
With marvellous pride and  
joy. 120

## X

And the Devil thought he had,  
'Mid the misery and confusion  
Of an unjust war, just made  
A fortune by the gainful trade  
Of giving soldiers rations bad— 125  
The world is full of strange de-  
lusion—

## XI

That he had a mansion planned  
In a square like Grosvenor  
Square,  
That he was aping fashion, and

That he now came to Westmore-  
land 130  
To see what was romantic there.

## XII

And all this, though quite ideal,—  
Ready at a breath to vanish,—  
Was a state not more unreal  
Than the peace he could not  
feel, 135  
Or the care he could not banish.

## XIII

After a little conversation,  
The Devil told Peter, if he chose,  
He'd bring him to the world of  
fashion  
By giving him a situation 140  
In his own service—and new  
clothes.

## XIV

And Peter bowed, quite pleased  
and proud,  
And after waiting some few days  
For a new livery—dirty yellow  
Turned up with black—the wretch-  
ed fellow 145  
Was bowled to Hell in the  
Devil's chaise.

## PART THE THIRD

## HELL

## I

HELL is a city much like London—  
A populous and a smoky city;  
There are all sorts of people un-  
done,  
And there is little or no fun  
done; 150  
Small justice shown, and still less  
pity.

## II

There is a Castles, and a Canning,  
 A Cobbett, and a Castlereagh;  
 All sorts of caitiff corpses planning  
 All sorts of cozening for trepan-  
     ning 155  
 Corpses less corrupt than they.

## III

There is a \* \* \*, who has lost  
 His wits, or sold them, none  
     knows which;  
 He walks about a double ghost,  
 And though as thin as Fraud al-  
     most— 160  
 Ever grows more grim and rich.

## IV

There is a Chancery Court; a  
     King;  
 A manufacturing mob; a set  
 Of thieves who by themselves are  
     sent  
 Similar thieves to represent; 165  
 An army; and a public debt.

## V

Which last is a scheme of paper  
     money,  
 And means—being interpret-  
     ed—  
 ‘Bees, keep your wax—give us the  
     honey,  
 And we will plant, while skies are  
     sunny, 170  
 Flowers, which in winter serve  
     instead.’

## VI

There is a great talk of revolu-  
     tion—  
 And a great chance of despot-  
     ism—  
 German soldiers—camps—confu-  
     sion—  
 Tumults — lotteries — rage — de-  
     lusion— 175  
 Gin—suicide—and methodism;

## VII

Taxes too, on wine and bread,  
 And meat, and beer, and tea, and  
     cheese,  
 From which those patriots pure are  
     fed, 179  
 Who gorge before they reel to bed  
 The tenfold essence of all these.

## VIII

There are mincing women, mew-  
     ing,  
 (Like cats, who *amant miserè*,<sup>1</sup>)  
 Of their own virtue, and pursuing  
 Their gentler sisters to that ruin,  
 Without which—what were chas-  
     tity? <sup>2</sup> 186

## IX

Lawyers—judges—old hobnobbers  
 Are there — bailiffs — chancel-  
     lors—  
 Bishops—great and little robbers—  
 Rhymesters—pamphleteers—  
     stock-jobbers— 190  
 Men of glory in the wars,—

<sup>1</sup> One of the attributes in Linnaeus's description of the Cat. To a similar cause the caterwauling of more than one species of this genus is to be referred;—except, indeed, that the poor quadruped is compelled to quarrel with its own pleasures, whilst the biped is supposed only to quarrel with those of others.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

<sup>2</sup> What would this husk and excuse for a virtue be without its kernel prostitu-  
 tion, or the kernel prostitution without this husk of a virtue? I wonder the women  
 of the town do not form an association, like the Society for the Suppression of  
 Vice, for the support of what may be called the ‘King, Church, and Constitution’  
 of their order. But this subject is almost too horrible for a joke.—[SHELLEY'S  
 NOTE.]

## X

Things whose trade is, over ladies  
 To lean, and flirt, and stare, and  
 simpler,  
 Till all that is divine in woman  
 Grows cruel, courteous, smooth, in-  
 human, 195  
 Crucified 'twixt a smile and  
 whimper.

## XI

Thrusting, toiling, wailing, moil-  
 ing,  
 Frowning, preaching—such a  
 riot!  
 Each with never-ceasing labour,  
 Whilst he thinks he cheats his  
 neighbour, 200  
 Cheating his own heart of quiet.

## XII

And all these meet at levees;—  
 Dinners convivial and politi-  
 cal;—  
 Suppers of epic poets;—teas,  
 Where small talk dies in agonies;—  
 Breakfasts professional and crit-  
 ical; 206

## XIII

Lunches and snacks so aldermanic  
 That one would furnish forth ten  
 dinners,  
 Where reigns a Cretan-tongued  
 panic,  
 Lest news Russ, Dutch, or Ale-  
 mannic 210  
 Should make some losers, and  
 some winners;—

## XIV

At conversazioni—balls—  
 Conventicles—and drawing-  
 rooms—

Courts of law—committees—calls  
 Of a morning—clubs—book-  
 stalls—

Churches—masquerades—and  
 tombs. 216

## XV

And this is Hell—and in this  
 smother  
 All are damnable and damned;  
 Each one damning, damns the  
 other;  
 They are damned by one another,  
 By none other are they damned. 221

## XVI

'Tis a lie to say, 'God damns !!'  
 Where was Heaven's Attorney  
 General  
 When they first gave out such  
 flams?  
 Let there be an end of shams, 225  
 They are mines of poisonous  
 mineral.

## XVII

Statesmen damn themselves to be  
 Cursed; and lawyers damn their  
 souls  
 To the auction of a fee;  
 Churchmen damn themselves to  
 see  
 God's sweet love in burning coals.

## XVIII

The rich are damned, beyond all  
 cure, 232  
 To taunt, and starve, and tram-  
 ple on  
 The weak and wretched; and the  
 poor  
 Damn their broken hearts to endure  
 Stripe on stripe, with groan on  
 groan. 236

<sup>1</sup> This libel on our national oath, and this accusation of all our countrymen of being in the daily practice of solemnly asseverating the most enormous falsehood, I fear deserves the notice of a more active Attorney General than that here alluded to.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

## XIX

Sometimes the poor are damned  
indeed

To take,—not means for being  
blessed,—

But Cobbett's snuff, revenge; that  
weed

From which the worms that it doth  
feed 240

Squeeze less than they before  
possessed.

## XX

And some few, like we know who,  
Damned—but God alone knows  
why— 243

To believe their minds are given  
To make this ugly Hell a Heaven;  
In which faith they live and die.

## XXI

Thus, as in a town, plague-stricken,  
Each man be he sound or no  
Must indifferently sicken;  
As when day begins to thicken, 250  
None knows a pigeon from a  
crow,—

## XXII

So good and bad, sane and mad,  
The oppressor and the oppressed;  
Those who weep to see what others  
Smile to inflict upon their brothers;  
Lovers, haters, worst and best;

## XXIII

All are damned—they breathe an  
air, 257

Thick, infected, joy-dispelling:  
Each pursues what seems most fair,  
Mining like moles, through mind,  
and there 260

Scoop palace-caverns vast, where  
Care

In thronèd state is ever dwelling.

## PART THE FOURTH

## SIN

## I

Lo, Peter in Hell's Grosvenor  
Square,

A footman in the Devil's service!  
And the misjudging world would  
swear 265

That every man in service there  
To virtue would prefer vice.

## II

But Peter, though now damned,  
was not

What Peter was before damna-  
tion.

Men oftentimes prepare a lot 270  
Which ere it finds them, is not  
what

Suits with their genuine station.

## III

All things that Peter saw and felt  
Had a peculiar aspect to him;  
And when they came within the  
belt 275

Of his own nature, seemed to melt,  
Like cloud to cloud, into him.

## IV

And so the outward world uniting  
To that within him, he became  
Considerably uninviting 280

To those who, meditation slighting,  
Were moulded in a different  
frame.

## V

And he scorned them, and they  
scorned him;

And he scorned all they did; and  
they

Did all that men of their own trim



Are wont to do to please their  
whim, 286  
Drinking, lying, swearing, play.

## VI

Such were his fellow-servants; thus  
His virtue, like our own, was  
built  
Too much on that indignant fuss 290  
Hypocrite Pride stirs up in us  
To bully one another's guilt.

## VII

He had a mind which was somehow  
At once circumference and centre  
Of all he might or feel or know; 295  
Nothing went ever out, although  
Something did ever enter.

## VIII

He had as much imagination  
As a pint-pot;—he never could  
Fancy another situation, 300  
From which to dart his contem-  
plation,  
Than that wherein he stood.

## IX

Yet his was individual mind,  
And new created all he saw  
In a new manner, and refined 305  
Those new creations, and combined  
Them, by a master-spirit's law.

## X

Thus—though unimaginative—  
An apprehension clear, intense,  
Of his mind's work, had made alive  
The things it wrought on; I believe  
Wakening a sort of thought in  
sense. 312

## XI

But from the first 'twas Peter's drift  
To be a kind of moral eunuch,  
He touched the hem of Nature's  
shift, 315

Felt faint—and never dared uplift  
The closest, all-concealing tunic.

## XII

She laughed the while, with an arch  
smile,  
And kissed him with a sister's  
kiss,  
And said—'My best Diogenes, 320  
I love you well—but, if you please,  
Tempt not again my deepest  
bliss.

## XIII

'Tis you are cold—for I, not coy,  
Yield love for love, frank, warm,  
and true;  
And Burns, a Scottish peasant  
boy— 325  
His errors prove it—knew my joy  
More, learnèd friend, than you.

## XIV

*'Bocca bacciata non perde ventura,  
Anzi rinnuova come fa la luna:—*  
So thought Boccaccio, whose sweet  
words might cure a 330  
Male prude, like you, from what  
you now endure, a  
Low-tide in soul, like a stagnant  
laguna.'

## XV

Then Peter rubbed his eyes severe,  
And smoothed his spacious fore-  
head down  
With his broad palm;—'twixt love  
and fear, 335  
He looked, as he no doubt felt,  
queer,  
And in his dream sate down.

## XVI

The Devil was no uncommon  
creature,  
A leaden-witted thief—just hud-  
dled 339

Out of the dross and scum of nature;  
 A toad-like lump of limb and feature,  
 With mind, and heart, and fancy  
 muddled. 342

## XVII

He was that heavy, dull, cold thing,  
 The spirit of evil well may be:  
 A drone too base to have a sting;  
 Who gluts, and grimes his lazy  
 wing,  
 And calls lust, luxury. 347

## XVIII

Now he was quite the kind of wight  
 Round whom collect, at a fixed  
 aera,  
 Venison, turtle, hock, and claret,—  
 Good cheer—and those who come  
 to share it— 351  
 And best East Indian madeira!

## XIX

It was his fancy to invite  
 Men of science, wit, and learning,  
 Who came to lend each other light;  
 He proudly thought that his gold's  
 might 356  
 Had set those spirits burning.

## XX

And men of learning, science, wit,  
 Considered him as you and I  
 Think of some rotten tree, and sit  
 Lounging and dining under it, 361  
 Exposed to the wide sky.

## XXI

And all the while, with loose fat  
 smile,  
 The willing wretch sat winking  
 there, 364  
 Believing 'twas his power that made  
 That jovial scene—and that all paid  
 Homage to his unnoticed chair.

## XXII

Though to be sure this place was  
 Hell;  
 He was the Devil—and all they—  
 What though the claret circled well,  
 And wit, like ocean, rose and fell?—  
 Were damned eternally. 372

## PART THE FIFTH

## GRACE

## I

AMONG the guests who often stayed  
 Till the Devil's petits-soupers,  
 A man there came, fair as a  
 maid, 375  
 And Peter noted what he said,  
 Standing behind his master's  
 chair.

## II

He was a mighty poet—and  
 A subtle-souled psychologist;  
 All things he seemed to understand,  
 Of old or new—of sea or land— 381  
 But his own mind—which was  
 a mist.

## III

This was a man who might have  
 turned  
 Hell into Heaven—and so in  
 gladness  
 A Heaven unto himself have  
 earned;  
 But he in shadows undiscerned 386  
 Trusted,—and damned himself  
 to madness.

## IV

He spoke of poetry, and how  
 'Divine it was—a light—a love—  
 A spirit which like wind doth blow  
 As it listeth, to and fro; 391  
 A dew rained down from God  
 above;

## V

'A power which comes and goes like  
dream,  
And which none can ever trace—  
Heaven's light on earth—Truth's  
brightest beam.' 395  
And when he ceased there lay the  
gleam  
Of those words upon his face.

## VI

Now Peter, when he heard such  
talk,  
Would, heedless of a broken pate,  
Stand like a man asleep, or balk 400  
Some wishing guest of knife or fork,  
Or drop and break his master's  
plate.

## VII

At night he oft would start and  
wake  
Like a lover, and began  
In a wild measure songs to make 405  
On moor, and glen, and rocky lake,  
And on the heart of man—

## VIII

And on the universal sky—  
And the wide earth's bosom  
green,—  
And the sweet, strange mystery 410  
Of what beyond these things may  
lie,  
And yet remain unseen.

## IX

For in his thought he visited  
The spots in which, ere dead and  
damned,  
He his wayward life had led; 415  
Yet knew not whence the thoughts  
were fed  
Which thus his fancy crammed.

## X

And these obscure remembrances  
Stirred such harmony in Peter,  
That, whensoever he should please,  
He could speak of rocks and trees  
In poetic metre. 422

## XI

For though it was without a sense  
Of memory, yet he remembered  
well  
Many a ditch and quick-set fence;  
Of lakes he had intelligence, 426  
He knew something of heath and  
fell.

## XII

He had also dim recollections  
Of pedlars tramping on their  
rounds;  
Milk-pans and pails; and odd col-  
lections 430  
Of saws, and proverbs; and reflec-  
tions  
Old parsons make in burying-  
grounds.

## XIII

But Peter's verse was clear, and  
came  
Announcing from the frozen  
hearth  
Of a cold age, that none might  
tame 435  
The soul of that diviner flame  
It augured to the Earth:

## XIV

Like gentle rains, on the dry plains,  
Making that green which late  
was gray,  
Or like the sudden moon, that  
stains  
Some gloomy chamber's window-  
panes 441  
With a broad light like day.

## XV

For language was in Peter's hand  
 Like clay while he was yet a  
 potter;  
 And he made songs for all the  
 land, 445  
 Sweet both to feel and understand,  
 As pipkins late to mountain Cot-  
 ter.

## XVI

And Mr. —, the bookseller,  
 Gave twenty pounds for some;—  
 then scorning  
 A footman's yellow coat to wear,  
 Peter, too proud of heart, I fear, 451  
 Instantly gave the Devil warn-  
 ing.

## XVII

Whereat the Devil took offence,  
 And swore in his soul a great  
 oath then, 454  
 'That for his damned impertinence  
 He'd bring him to a proper sense  
 Of what was due to gentlemen!'

## PART THE SIXTH

## DAMNATION

## I

'O THAT mine enemy had written  
 A book!'—cried Job:—a fearful  
 curse,  
 If to the Arab, as the Briton, 460  
 'Twas galling to be critic-bitten:—  
 The Devil to Peter wished no  
 worse.

## II

When Peter's next new book found  
 vent,  
 The Devil to all the first Reviews  
 A copy of it slyly sent, 465  
 With five-pound note as compli-  
 ment,  
 And this short notice—'Pray  
 abuse.'

## III

Then *seriatim*, month and quarter,  
 Appeared such mad tirades.—  
 One said—  
 'Peter seduced Mrs. Foy's daugh-  
 ter,  
 Then drowned the mother in Ulls-  
 water, 471  
 The last thing as he went to bed.'

## IV

Another—'Let him shave his head!  
 Where's Dr. Willis?—Or is he  
 joking?  
 What does the rascal mean or  
 hope, 475  
 No longer imitating Pope,  
 In that barbarian Shakespeare  
 poking?'

## V

One more, 'Is incest not enough?  
 And must there be adultery too?  
 Grace after meat? Miscreant and  
 Liar! 480  
 Thief! Blackguard! Scoundrel!  
 Fool! Hell-fire  
 Is twenty times too good for you.

## VI

'By that last book of yours we  
 think  
 You've double damned yourself  
 to scorn;  
 We warned you whilst yet on the  
 brink 485  
 You stood. From your black name  
 will shrink  
 The babe that is unborn.'

## VII

All these Reviews the Devil made  
 Up in a parcel, which he had  
 Safely to Peter's house con-  
 veyed. 490  
 For carriage, tenpence Peter paid—  
 Untied them—read them—went  
 half mad.

## VIII

'What!' cried he, 'this is my reward  
For nights of thought, and days  
of toil?

Do poets, but to be abhorred 495  
By men of whom they never heard,  
Consume their spirits' oil?

## IX

'What have I done to them?—and  
who

*Is* Mrs. Foy? 'Tis very cruel  
To speak of me and Betty so! 500  
Adultery! God defend me! Oh!  
I've half a mind to fight a duel.

## X

'Or,' cried he, a grave look collect-  
ing,

'Is it my genius, like the moon,  
Sets those who stand her face in-  
specting, 505  
That face within their brain reflect-  
ing,  
Like a crazed bell-chime, out of  
tune?'

## XI

For Peter did not know the town,  
But thought, as country readers  
do,  
For half a guinea or a crown, 510  
He bought oblivion or renown  
From God's own voice <sup>1</sup> in a re-  
view.

## XII

All Peter did on this occasion  
Was, writing some sad stuff in  
prose.

It is a dangerous invasion 515  
When poets criticize; their station  
Is to delight, not pose.

## XIII

The Devil then sent to Leipsic fair  
For Born's translation of Kant's  
book;  
A world of words, tail foremost,  
where  
Right — wrong — false — true —  
and foul—and fair 521  
As in a lottery-wheel are shook.

## XIV

Five thousand crammed octavo  
pages  
Of German psychologies,—he  
Who his *furor verborum* as-  
suages 525  
Thereon, deserves just seven  
months' wages  
More than will e'er be due to me.

## XV

I looked on them nine several days,  
And then I saw that they were  
bad;  
A friend, too, spoke in their dis-  
praise,— 530  
He never read them;—with amaze  
I found Sir William Drummond  
had.

## XVI

When the book came, the Devil  
sent  
It to P. Verbovale,<sup>2</sup> Esquire,  
With a brief note of compliment,

<sup>1</sup> *Vox populi, vox dei*. As Mr. Godwin truly observes of a more famous saying, *of some merit as a popular maxim, but totally destitute of philosophical accuracy.* —[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

<sup>2</sup> Quasi, *Qui valet verba*:—i. e. all the words which have been, are, or may be expended by, for, against, with, or on him. A sufficient proof of the utility of this history. Peter's progenitor who selected this name seems to have possessed a *pure anticipated cognition* of the nature and modesty of this ornament of his posterity. —[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

By that night's Carlisle mail. It  
went, 536  
And set his soul on fire.

## XVII

Fire, which *ex luce praebens  
fumum*,  
Made him beyond the bottom see  
Of truth's clear well—when I and  
you, Ma'am, 540  
Go, as we shall do, *subter humum*,  
We may know more than he.

## XVIII

Now Peter ran to seed in soul  
Into a walking paradox;  
For he was neither part nor whole,  
Nor good, nor bad—nor knave nor  
fool; 546  
—Among the woods and rocks

## XIX

Furious he rode, where late he  
ran,  
Lashing and spurring his tame  
hobby;  
Turned to a formal puritan, 550  
A solemn and unsexual man,—  
He half believed *White Obi*.

## XX

This steed in vision he would ride,  
High trotting over nine-inch  
bridges, 554  
With Flibbertigibbet, imp of pride,  
Mocking and mowing by his side—  
A mad-brained goblin for a guide—  
Over corn-fields, gates, and  
hedges.

## XXI

After these ghastly rides, he came  
Home to his heart, and found  
from thence 560  
Much stolen of its accustomed  
flame;

His thoughts grew weak, drowsy,  
and lame  
Of their intelligence.

## XXII

To Peter's view, all seemed one  
hue;  
He was no Whig, he was no  
Tory;  
No Deist and no Christian he;—566  
He got so subtle, that to be  
Nothing, was all his glory.

## XXIII

One single point in his belief  
From his organization sprung, 570  
The heart-enrooted faith, the chief  
Ear in his doctrines' blighted sheaf,  
That 'Happiness is wrong';

## XXIV

So thought Calvin and Dominic;  
So think their fierce successors,  
who  
Even now would neither stint nor  
stick 576  
Our flesh from off our bones to pick,  
If they might 'do their do.'

## XXV

His morals thus were under-  
mined:—  
The old Peter—the hard, old  
Potter— 580  
Was born anew within his mind;  
He grew dull, harsh, sly, unrefined,  
As when he tramped beside the  
Otter.<sup>1</sup>

## XXVI

In the death hues of agony 584  
Lambently flashing from a fish,  
Now Peter felt amused to see  
Shades like a rainbow's rise and  
flee,  
Mixed with a certain hungry  
wish.

<sup>1</sup> A famous river in the new Atlantis of the Dynastophylic Pantisocratists.—  
[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

## XXVII

So in his Country's dying face  
 He looked—and, lovely as she  
 lay,  
 Seeking in vain his last embrace, 591  
 Wailing her own abandoned case,  
 With hardened sneer he turned  
 away:

## XXVIII

And coolly to his own soul said;—  
 'Do you not think that we might  
 make 595  
 A poem on her when she's dead:—  
 Or no—a thought is in my head—  
 Her shroud for a new sheet I'll  
 take:

## XXIX

'My wife wants one.—Let who will  
 bury  
 This mangled corpse! And I and  
 you, 600  
 My dearest Soul, will then make  
 merry,  
 As the Prince Regent did with  
 Sherry,—'  
 'Ay—and at last desert me too.'

## XXX

And so his Soul would not be  
 gay,  
 But moaned within him; like a  
 fawn 605  
 Moaning within a cave, it lay  
 Wounded and wasting, day by  
 day,  
 Till all its life of life was gone.

## XXXI

As troubled skies stain waters clear,  
 The storm in Peter's heart and  
 mind  
 Now made his verses dark and  
 queer:  
 They were the ghosts of what they  
 were, 612

Shaking dim grave-clothes in the  
 wind.

## XXXII

For he now raved enormous folly,  
 Of Baptisms, Sunday-schools,  
 and Graves, 615  
 'Twould make George Colman  
 melancholy  
 To have heard him, like a male  
 Molly,  
 Chanting those stupid staves.

## XXXIII

Yet the Reviews, who heaped abuse  
 On Peter while he wrote for free-  
 dom, 620  
 So soon as in his song they spy  
 The folly which soothes tyranny,  
 Praise him, for those who feed  
 'em.

## XXXIV

'He was a man, too great to scan;—  
 A planet lost in truth's keen  
 rays:— 625  
 His virtue, awful and prodigious;—  
 He was the most sublime, religious,  
 Pure-minded Poet of these days.'

## XXXV

As soon as he read that, cried Peter,  
 'Eureka! I have found the way  
 To make a better thing of metre 631  
 Than e'er was made by living crea-  
 ture  
 Up to this blessed day.'

## XXXVI

Then Peter wrote odes to the  
 Devil;—  
 In one of which he meekly said:  
 'May Carnage and Slaughter, 636  
 Thy niece and thy daughter,  
 May Rapine and Famine,  
 Thy gorge ever cramming,  
 Glut thee with living and dead!

## XXXVII

'May Death and Damnation, 641  
And Consternation,  
Flit up from Hell with pure intent!  
Slash them at Manchester,  
Glasgow, Leeds, and Chester; 645  
Drench all with blood from Avon  
to Trent.

## XXXVIII

'Let thy body-guard yeomen  
Hew down babes and women,  
And laugh with bold triumph till  
Heaven be rent!  
When Moloch in Jewry 650  
Munched children with fury,  
It was thou, Devil, dining with pure  
intent.'<sup>1</sup>

## PART THE SEVENTH

## DOUBLE DAMNATION

## I

THE Devil now knew his proper  
cue.—

Soon as he read the ode, he drove  
To his friend Lord MacMurder-  
chouse's, 655  
A man of interest in both houses,  
And said:—'For money or for  
love,

## II

'Pray find some cure or sinecure;  
To feed from the superfluous  
taxes

A friend of ours—a poet—fewer 660  
Have fluttered tamer to the lure  
Than he.' His lordship stands  
and racks his

## III

Stupid brains, while one might  
count  
As many beads as he had  
boroughs,—  
At length replies; from his mean  
front, 665  
Like one who rubs out an account,  
Smoothing away the unmeaning  
furrows:

## IV

'Tt happens fortunately, dear Sir,  
I can. I hope I need require  
No pledge from you, that he will  
stir 670  
In our affairs;—like Oliver,  
That he'll be worthy of his hire.'

## V

These words exchanged, the news  
sent off  
To Peter, home the Devil hied,—  
Took to his bed; he had no cough,  
No doctor,—meat and drink  
enough,— 676  
Yet that same night he died.

## VI

The Devil's corpse was leaded  
down;  
His decent heirs enjoyed his  
pelf,  
Mourning-coaches, many a one, 680  
Followed his hearse along the  
town:—  
Where was the Devil himself?

## VII

When Peter heard of his promo-  
tion,  
His eyes grew like two stars for  
bliss:

<sup>1</sup> It is curious to observe how often extremes meet. Cobbett and Peter use the same language for a different purpose: Peter is indeed a sort of metrical Cobbett. Cobbett is, however, more mischievous than Peter, because he pollutes a holy and now unconquerable cause with the principles of legitimate murder; whilst the other only makes a bad one ridiculous and odious.

If either Peter or Cobbett should see this note, each will feel more indignation at being compared to the other than at any censure implied in the moral perversion laid to their charge.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]



There was a bow of sleek devotion  
Engendering in his back; each mo-  
tion 686  
Seemed a Lord's shoe to kiss.

## VIII

He hired a house, bought plate, and  
made  
A genteel drive up to his door,  
With sifted gravel neatly laid,—690  
As if defying all who said,  
Peter was ever poor.

## IX

But a disease soon struck into  
The very life and soul of Peter—  
He walked about—slept—had the  
hue 695  
Of health upon his cheeks—and  
few  
Dug better—none a heartier  
eater.

## X

And yet a strange and horrid curse  
Clung upon Peter, night and  
day;  
Month after month the thing grew  
worse, 700  
And deadlier than in this my verse  
I can find strength to say.

## XI

Peter was dull—he was at first  
Dull—oh, so dull—so very dull!  
Whether he talked, wrote, or re-  
hearsed— 705  
Still with this dulness was he  
cursed—  
Dull—beyond all conception—  
dull.

## XII

No one could read his books—no  
mortal,  
But a few natural friends, would  
hear him;

The parson came not near his  
portal;  
His state was like that of the im-  
mortal 711  
Described by Swift—no man  
could bear him.

## XIII

His sister, wife, and children  
yawned,  
With a long, slow, and drear  
ennui,  
All human patience far beyond; 715  
Their hopes of Heaven each would  
have pawned,  
Anywhere else to be.

## XIV

But in his verse, and in his prose,  
The essence of his dulness was  
Concentred and compressed so  
close,  
'Twould have made Guatimozin  
doze  
On his red gridiron of brass. 722

## XV

A printer's boy, folding those pages,  
Fell slumbrously upon one side;  
Like those famed Seven who slept  
three ages. 725  
To wakeful frenzy's vigil-rages,  
As opiates, were the same ap-  
plied.

## XVI

Even the Reviewers who were hired  
To do the work of his reviewing,  
With adamantine nerves, grew  
tired;— 730  
Gaping and torpid they retired,  
To dream of what they should be  
doing.

## XVII

And worse and worse, the drowsy  
curse

Yawned in him, till it grew a  
 pest—  
 A wide contagious atmosphere, 735  
 Creeping like cold through all  
 things near;  
 A power to infect and to infest.

## XVIII

His servant-maids and dogs grew  
 dull;  
 His kitten, late a sportive elf;  
 The woods and lakes, so beautiful,  
 Of dim stupidity were full, 741  
 All grew dull as Peter's self.

## XIX

The earth under his feet—the  
 springs,  
 Which lived within it a quick life,  
 The air, the winds of many wings,  
 That fan it with new murmurings,  
 Were dead to their harmonious  
 strife. 747

## XX

The birds and beasts within the  
 wood,  
 The insects, and each creeping  
 thing,  
 Were now a silent multitude; 750  
 Love's work was left unwrought—  
 no brood  
 Near Peter's house took wing.

## XXI

And every neighbouring cottager  
 Stupidly yawned upon the other:  
 No jackass brayed; no little cur 755  
 Cocked up his ears;—no man  
 would stir  
 To save a dying mother.

## XXII

Yet all from that charmed dis-  
 trict went  
 But some half-idiot and half-  
 knave,  
 Who rather than pay any rent, 760  
 Would live with marvellous con-  
 tent,  
 Over his father's grave.

## XXIII

No bailiff dared within that space,  
 For fear of the dull charm, to  
 enter;  
 A man would bear upon his face, 765  
 For fifteen months in any case,  
 The yawn of such a venture.

## XXIV

Seven miles above—below—  
 around—  
 This pest of dulness holds its  
 sway;  
 A ghastly life without a sound; 770  
 To Peter's soul the spell is bound—  
 How should it ever pass away?

## NOTE ON PETER BELL THE THIRD, BY MRS. SHELLEY

IN this new edition I have added *Peter Bell the Third*. A critique on Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* reached us at Leghorn, which amused Shelley exceedingly, and suggested this poem.

I need scarcely observe that nothing personal to the author of *Peter Bell* is intended in this poem. No man ever admired Wordsworth's poetry more;—he read it perpetually, and taught others to appreciate its beauties. This poem is, like all others written by Shelley, ideal. He conceived the idealism of a poet—a man of lofty and creative genius—quitting the glorious calling of discovering and announcing the beautiful and good, to support and propagate ignorant prejudices and pernicious

errors; imparting to the unenlightened, not that ardour for truth and spirit of toleration which Shelley looked on as the sources of the moral improvement and happiness of mankind, but false and injurious opinions, that evil was good, and that ignorance and force were the best allies of purity and virtue. His idea was that a man gifted, even as transcendently as the author of *Peter Bell*, with the highest qualities of genius, must, if he fostered such errors, be infected with dulness. This poem was written as a warning—not as a narration of the reality. He was unacquainted personally with Wordsworth, or with Coleridge (to whom he alludes in the fifth part of the poem), and therefore, I repeat, his poem is purely ideal;—it contains something of criticism on the compositions of those great poets, but nothing injurious to the men themselves.

No poem contains more of Shelley's peculiar views with regard to the errors into which many of the wisest have fallen, and the pernicious effects of certain opinions on society. Much of it is beautifully written: and, though, like the burlesque drama of *Swellfoot*, it must be looked on as a plaything, it has so much merit and poetry—so much of *himself* in it—that it cannot fail to interest greatly, and by right belongs to the world for whose instruction and benefit it was written.

## OEDIPUS TYRANNUS

OR

## SWELLFOOT THE TYRANT

### A TRAGEDY IN TWO ACTS

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL DORIC

'Choose Reform or Civil War,  
When through thy streets, instead of hare with dogs,  
A CONSORT-QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs,  
Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR.'

### ADVERTISEMENT

THIS Tragedy is one of a triad, or system of three Plays (an arrangement according to which the Greeks were accustomed to connect their dramatic representations), elucidating the wonderful and appalling fortunes of the SWELLFOOT dynasty. It was evidently written by some *learned Theban*, and, from its characteristic dulness, apparently before the duties on the importation of *Attic salt* had been repealed by the Boeotarchs. The tenderness with which he treats the PIGS proves him to have been a *sus Boeotiae*; possibly *Epicuri de grege porcus*; for, as the poet observes,

'A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.'

No liberty has been taken with the translation of this remarkable piece of antiquity, except the suppressing a seditious and blasphemous Chorus of the Pigs and Bulls at the last Act. The word Hoydipouse (or more properly Oedipus) has been rendered literally SWELLFOOT, without its having been conceived necessary to determine whether a swelling of the hind or the fore feet of the Swinish Monarch is particularly indicated.

Should the remaining portions of this Tragedy be found, entitled, *Swellfoot in Angaria*, and *Charité*, the Translator might be tempted to give them to the reading Public.

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

|                                          |                                              |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| TYRANT SWELLFOOT, <i>King of Thebes.</i> | <i>The GADFLY.</i>                           |
| IONA TAURINA, <i>his Queen.</i>          | <i>The LEECH.</i>                            |
| MAMMON, <i>Arch-Priest of Famine.</i>    | <i>The RAT.</i>                              |
| PURGANAX                                 | } <i>Wizards, Ministers of</i><br>SWELLFOOT. |
| DAKRY                                    |                                              |
| LAOCTONOS                                |                                              |
|                                          | <i>MOSES, the Sow-gelder.</i>                |
|                                          | <i>SOLOMON, the Porkman.</i>                 |
|                                          | <i>ZEPHANIAH, Pig-butcher.</i>               |
|                                          | <i>The MINOTAUR.</i>                         |

CHORUS of the *Swinish Multitude.*

GUARDS, ATTENDANTS, PRIESTS, *etc., etc.*

### SCENE.—THEBES

#### ACT I

**SCENE I.**—*A magnificent Temple, built of thigh-bones and death's-heads, and tiled with scalps. Over the Altar the statue of Famine, veiled; a number of Boars, Sows, and Sucking-Pigs, crowned with thistle, shamrock, and oak, sitting on the steps, and clinging round the Altar of the Temple.*

*Enter SWELLFOOT, in his Royal robes, without perceiving the PIGS.*

*Swellfoot.* Thou supreme Goddess! by whose power divine  
These graceful limbs are clothed in proud array

[*He contemplates himself with satisfaction.*]

Of gold and purple, and this kingly paunch

Swells like a sail before a favouring breeze,

And these most sacred nether promontories

Lie satisfied with layers of fat; and these

Boeotian cheeks, like Egypt's pyramid,  
(Nor with less toil were their foundations laid),<sup>1</sup>

Sustain the cone of my untroubled brain,

That point, the emblem of a pointless nothing!

Thou to whom Kings and laurelled Emperors,

5

10

<sup>1</sup> See Universal History for an account of the number of people who died, and the immense consumption of garlic by the wretched Egyptians, who made a sepulchre for the name as well as the bodies of their tyrants.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Radical-butchers, Paper-money-millers,  
 Bishops and Deacons, and the entire army  
 Of those fat martyrs to the persecution  
 Of stifling turtle-soup, and brandy-devils, 15  
 Offer their secret vows! Thou plenteous Ceres  
 Of their Eleusis, hail!

*The Swine.* Eigh! eigh! eigh! eigh!

*Swellfoot.* Ha! what are ye,  
 Who, crowned with leaves devoted to the Furies,  
 Cling round this sacred shrine?

*Swine.* Aigh! aigh! aigh!

*Swellfoot.* What! ye that are  
 The very beasts that, offered at her altar 20  
 With blood and groans, salt-cake, and fat, and inwards,  
 Ever propitiate her reluctant will  
 When taxes are withheld?

*Swine.* Ugh! ugh! ugh!

*Swellfoot.* What! ye who grub  
 With filthy snouts my red potatoes up  
 In Allan's rushy bog? Who eat the oats 25  
 Up, from my cavalry in the Hebrides?  
 Who swill the hog-wash soup my cooks digest  
 From bones, and rags, and scraps of shoe-leather,  
 Which should be given to cleaner Pigs than you?

*The Swine.—Semichorus I.*

The same, alas! the same;  
 Though only now the name 30  
 Of Pig remains to me.

*Semichorus II.*

If 'twere your kingly will  
 Us wretched Swine to kill,  
 What should we yield to thee? 35

*Swellfoot.* Why, skin and bones, and some few hairs for mortar.

*Chorus of Swine.*

I have heard your Laureate sing,  
 That pity was a royal thing;  
 Under your mighty ancestors, we Pigs  
 Were bless'd as nightingales on myrtle sprigs, 40  
 Or grasshoppers that live on noonday dew,  
 And sung, old annals tell, as sweetly too;  
 But now our sties are fallen in, we catch  
 The murrain and the mange, the scab and itch;  
 Sometimes your royal dogs tear down our thatch, 45  
 And then we seek the shelter of a ditch;

## S H E L L E Y

Hog-wash or grains, or ruta-baga, none  
Has yet been ours since your reign begun.

*First Sow.*

My Pigs, 'tis in vain to tug.

*Second Sow.*

I could almost eat my litter. 50

*First Pig.*

I suck, but no milk will come from the dug.

*Second Pig.*

Our skin and our bones would be bitter.

*The Boars.*

We fight for this rag of greasy rug,  
Though a trough of wash would be fitter.

*Semichorus.*

Happier Swine were they than we, 55  
Drowned in the Gadarean sea—  
I wish that pity would drive out the devils,  
Which in your royal bosom hold their revels,  
And sink us in the waves of thy compassion!  
Alas! the Pigs are an unhappy nation! 60  
Now if your Majesty would have our bristles  
To bind your mortar with, or fill our colons  
With rich blood, or make brawn out of our gristles,  
In policy—ask else your royal Solons—  
You ought to give us hog-wash and clean straw, 65  
And sties well thatched; besides it is the law!

*Swellfoot.* This is sedition, and rank blasphemy!  
Ho! there, my guards!

*Enter a GUARD.*

*Guard.* Your sacred Majesty.

*Swellfoot.* Call in the Jews, Solomon the court porkman,  
Moses the sow-gelder, and Zephaniah 70  
The hog-butcher.

*Guard.* They are in waiting, Sire.

*Enter SOLOMON, MOSES, and ZEPHANIAH.*

*Swellfoot.* Out with your knife, old Moses, and spay those Sows  
[*The Pigs run about in consternation.*  
That load the earth with Pigs; cut close and deep.

Moral restraint I see has no effect,  
 Nor prostitution, nor our own example, 75  
 Starvation, typhus-fever, war, nor prison—  
 This was the art which the arch-priest of Famine  
 Hinted at in his charge to the Theban clergy—  
 Cut close and deep, good Moses.

*Moses.* Let your Majesty  
 Keep the Boars quiet, else——  
*Swellfoot.* Zephaniah, cut 80

That fat Hog's throat, the brute seems overfed;  
 Seditious hunks! to whine for want of grains.  
*Zephaniah.* Your sacred Majesty, he has the dropsy;—  
 We shall find pints of hydatids in 's liver,  
 He has not half an inch of wholesome fat 85  
 Upon his carious ribs——

*Swellfoot.* 'Tis all the same,  
 He'll serve instead of riot money, when  
 Our murmuring troops bivouac in Thebes' streets;  
 And January winds, after a day  
 Of butchering, will make them relish carrion. 90  
 Now, Solomon, I'll sell you in a lump  
 The whole kit of them.

*Solomon.* Why, your Majesty,  
 I could not give——  
*Swellfoot.* Kill them out of the way,  
 That shall be price enough, and let me hear  
 Their everlasting grunts and whines no more! 93

[*Exeunt, driving in the SWINE*

*Enter MAMMON, the Arch-Priest; and PURGANAX, Chief of the Council  
 of Wizards.*

*Purganax.* The future looks as black as death, a cloud,  
 Dark as the frown of Hell, hangs over it—  
 The troops grow mutinous—the revenue fails—  
 There's something rotten in us—for the level  
 Of the State slopes, its very bases topple, 100  
 The boldest turn their backs upon themselves!

*Mammon.* Why what's the matter, my dear fellow, now?  
 Do the troops mutiny?—decimate some regiments;  
 Does money fail?—come to my mint—coin paper,  
 Till gold be at a discount, and ashamed 105  
 To show his bilious face, go purge himself,  
 In emulation of her vestal whiteness.

*Purganax.* Oh, would that this were all! The oracle!!

*Mammon.* Why it was I who spoke that oracle,  
 And whether I was dead drunk or inspired, 110

I cannot well remember; nor, in truth,  
The oracle itself!

*Purganax.* The words went thus:—  
'Boeotia, choose reform or civil war!  
When through the streets, instead of hare with dogs,  
A Consort Queen shall hunt a King with Hogs,  
Riding on the Ionian Minotaur.'

115

*Mammon.* Now if the oracle had ne'er foretold  
This sad alternative, it must arrive,  
Or not, and so it must now that it has;  
And whether I was urged by grace divine  
Or Lesbian liquor to declare these words,  
Which must, as all words must, be false or true,  
It matters not: for the same Power made all,  
Oracle, wine, and me and you—or none—  
'Tis the same thing. If you knew as much  
Of oracles as I do——

120

125

*Purganax.* You arch-priests  
Believe in nothing; if you were to dream  
Of a particular number in the Lottery,  
You would not buy the ticket?

*Mammon.* Yet our tickets  
Are seldom blanks. But what steps have you taken?  
For prophecies, when once they get abroad,  
Like liars who tell the truth to serve their ends,  
Or hypocrites who, from assuming virtue,  
Do the same actions that the virtuous do,  
Contrive their own fulfilment. This Iona——  
Well—you know what the chaste Pasiphae did,  
Wife to that most religious King of Crete,  
And still how popular the tale is here;  
And these dull Swine of Thebes boast their descent  
From the free Minotaur. You know they still  
Call themselves Bulls, though thus degenerate,  
And everything relating to a Bull  
Is popular and respectable in Thebes.  
Their arms are seven Bulls in a field gules;  
They think their strength consists in eating beef,—  
Now there were danger in the precedent  
If Queen Iona——

130

135

140

145

*Purganax.* I have taken good care  
That shall not be. I struck the crust o' the earth  
With this enchanted rod, and Hell lay bare!  
And from a cavern full of ugly shapes  
I chose a LEECH, a GADFLY, and a RAT.  
The Gadfly was the same which Juno sent

150



To agitate Io,<sup>1</sup> and which Ezekiel<sup>2</sup> mentions  
 That the Lord whistled for out of the mountains  
 Of utmost Aethiopia, to torment 155  
 Mesopotamian Babylon. The beast  
 Has a loud trumpet like the scarabee,  
 His crookèd tail is barbed with many stings,  
 Each able to make a thousand wounds, and each  
 Immedicable; from his convex eyes 160  
 He sees fair things in many hideous shapes,  
 And trumpets all his falsehood to the world.  
 Like other beetles he is fed on dung—  
 He has eleven feet with which he crawls,  
 Trailing a blistering slime, and this foul beast 165  
 Has tracked Iona from the Theban limits,  
 From isle to isle, from city unto city,  
 Urging her flight from the far Chersonese  
 To fabulous Solyma, and the Aetnean Isle,  
 Ortygia, Melite, and Calypso's Rock, 170  
 And the swart tribes of Garamant and Fez,  
 Aeolia and Elysium, and thy shores,  
 Parthenope, which now, alas! are free!  
 And through the fortunate Saturnian land,  
 Into the darkness of the West.

*Mammon.* But if 175  
 This Gadfly should drive Iona hither?

*Purganax.* Gods, what an *if*! but there is my gray RAT:  
 So thin with want, he can crawl in and out  
 Of any narrow chink and filthy hole,  
 And he shall creep into her dressing-room, 180  
 And——

*Mammon.* My dear friend, where are your wits? as if  
 She does not always toast a piece of cheese  
 And bait the trap? and rats, when lean enough  
 To crawl through *such* chinks——

*Purganax.* But my LEECH—a leech 185  
 Fit to suck blood, with lubricous round rings,  
 Capaciously expatiative, which make  
 His little body like a red balloon,  
 As full of blood as that of hydrogen,  
 Sucked from men's hearts; insatiably he sucks  
 And clings and pulls—a horse-leech, whose deep maw 190  
 The plethoric King Swellfoot could not fill,  
 And who, till full, will cling for ever.

*Mammon.* This

<sup>1</sup> The *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

<sup>2</sup> And the Lord whistled for the gadfly out of Aethiopia, and for the bee of Egypt, etc.—EZEKIEL.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

For Queen Iona would suffice, and less;  
But 'tis the Swinish multitude I fear,  
And in that fear I have——

*Purganax.*

Done what?

*Mammon.*

Disinherited 195

My eldest son Chrysaor, because he  
Attended public meetings, and would always  
Stand prating there of commerce, public faith,  
Economy, and unadulterate coin,  
And other topics, ultra-radical; 200  
And have entailed my estate, called the Fool's Paradise,  
And funds in fairy-money, bonds, and bills,  
Upon my accomplished daughter Banknotina,  
And married her to the gallows.<sup>1</sup>

*Purganax.*

A good match!

*Mammon.* A high connexion, Purganax. The bridegroom  
Is of a very ancient family, 206  
Of Hounslow Heath, Tyburn, and the New Drop,  
And has great influence in both Houses;—oh!  
He makes the fondest husband; nay, *too* fond,—  
New-married people should not kiss in public; 210  
But the poor souls love one another so!  
And then my little grandchildren, the gibbets,  
Promising children as you ever saw,—  
The young playing at hanging, the elder learning  
How to hold radicals. They are well taught too, 215  
For every gibbet says its catechism  
And reads a select chapter in the Bible  
Before it goes to play.

[*A most tremendous humming is heard.*]

*Purganax.*

Ha! what do I hear?

*Enter the GADFLY.*

*Mammon.* Your Gadfly, as it seems, is tired of gadding.

*Gadfly.*

Hum! hum! hum! 220  
From the lakes of the Alps, and the cold gray scalps  
Of the mountains, I come!  
Hum! hum! hum!  
From Morocco and Fez, and the high palaces  
Of golden Byzantium; 225  
From the temples divine of old Palestine,  
From Athens and Rome,  
With a ha! and a hum!  
I come! I come!

<sup>1</sup> 'If one should marry a gallows, and beget young gibbets, I never saw one so prone.'—CYMBELINE.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

All inn-doors and windows 230  
 Were open to me:  
 I saw all that sin does,  
 Which lamps hardly see  
 That burn in the night by the curtained bed,—  
 The impudent lamps! for they blushed not red, 235  
 Dinging and singing,  
 From slumber I rung her,  
 Loud as the clank of an ironmonger;  
 Hum! hum! hum!

Far, far, far! 240  
 With the trump of my lips, and the sting at my hips,  
 I drove her—afar!  
 Far, far, far!  
 From city to city, abandoned of pity,  
 A ship without needle or star;— 245  
 Homeless she passed, like a cloud on the blast,  
 Seeking peace, finding war;—  
 She is here in her car,  
 From afar, and afar;—  
 Hum! hum! 250

I have stung her and wrung her,  
 The venom is working;—  
 And if you had hung her  
 With canting and quirking,  
 She could not be deader than she will be soon;— 255  
 I have driven her close to you, under the moon,  
 Night and day, hum! hum! ha!  
 I have hummed her and drummed her  
 From place to place, till at last I have dumbled her,  
 Hum! hum! hum! 260

*Enter the LEECH and the RAT.*

*Leech.*

I will suck  
 Blood or muck!  
 The disease of the state is a plethory,  
 Who so fit to reduce it as I?

*Rat.*

I'll slily seize and 265  
 Let blood from her weasand,—  
 Creeping through crevice, and chink, and cranny,  
 With my snaky tail, and my sides so scranny.

## S H E L L E Y

*Purganax.*

Aroint ye! thou unprofitable worm! [To the LEECH.  
 And thou, dull beetle, get thee back to hell! 270  
 | To the GADFLY.

To sting the ghosts of Babylonian kings,  
 And the ox-headed Io——

*Swine (within).*

Ugh, ugh, ugh!  
 Hail! Iona the divine,  
 We will be no longer Swine,  
 But Bulls with horns and dewlaps.

*Rat.*

For, 275  
 You know, my lord, the Minotaur——

*Purganax (fiercely).*

Be silent! get to hell! or I will call  
 The cat out of the kitchen. Well, Lord Mammon,  
 This is a pretty business. [Exit the RAT.

*Mammon.*

I will go  
 And spell some scheme to make it ugly then.— [Exit.

*Enter SWELLFOOT.*

*Swellfoot.* She is returned! Taurina is in Thebes, 281  
 When Swellfoot wishes that she were in hell!  
 Oh, Hymen, clothed in yellow jealousy,  
 And waving o'er the couch of wedded kings  
 The torch of Discord with its fiery hair; 285  
 This is thy work, thou patron saint of queens!  
 Swellfoot is wived! though parted by the sea,  
 The very name of wife had conjugal rights;  
 Her cursèd image ate, drank, slept with me,  
 And in the arms of Adiposa oft 290  
 Her memory has received a husband's——

[A loud tumult, and cries of 'Iona for ever!—No Swellfoot!'  
 Hark!

How the Swine cry Iona Taurina;  
 I suffer the real presence; Purganax,  
 Off with her head!

*Purganax.* But I must first impanel  
 A jury of the Pigs.

*Swellfoot.* Pack them then. 295

*Purganax.* Or fattening some few in two separate sties,

And giving them clean straw, tying some bits  
 Of ribbon round their legs—giving their Sows  
 Some tawdry lace, and bits of lustre glass,  
 And their young Boars white and red rags, and tails 300  
 Of cows, and jay feathers, and sticking cauliflowers  
 Between the ears of the old ones; and when  
 They are persuaded, that by the inherent virtue  
 Of these things, they are all imperial Pigs,  
 Good Lord! they'd rip each other's bellies up, 305  
 Not to say, help us in destroying her.

*Swellfoot.* This plan might be tried too;—where's General  
 Laoctonos?

*Enter LAOCTONOS and DAKRY.*

It is my royal pleasure  
 That you, Lord General, bring the head and body,  
 If separate it would please me better, hither 310  
 Of Queen Iona.

*Laoctonos.* That pleasure I well knew,  
 And made a charge with those battalions bold,  
 Called, from their dress and grin, the royal apes,  
 Upon the Swine, who in a hollow square  
 Enclosed her, and received the first attack 315  
 Like so many rhinoceroses, and then  
 Retreating in good order, with bare tusks  
 And wrinkled snouts presented to the foe,  
 Bore her in triumph to the public sty.  
 What is still worse, some Sows upon the ground 320  
 Have given the ape-guards apples, nuts, and gin,  
 And they all whisk their tails aloft, and cry,  
 'Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!'

*Purganax.* Hark!

*The Swine (without).* Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!

*Dakry.* I

Went to the garret of the swineherd's tower, 325  
 Which overlooks the sty, and made a long  
 Harangue (all words) to the assembled Swine,  
 Of delicacy, mercy, judgement, law,  
 Morals, and precedents, and purity,  
 Adultery, destitution, and divorce, 330  
 Piety, faith, and state necessity,  
 And how I loved the Queen!—and then I wept  
 With the pathos of my own eloquence,  
 And every tear turned to a mill-stone, which  
 Brained many a gaping Pig, and there was made 335  
 A slough of blood and brains upon the place,  
 Greased with the pounded bacon; round and round

The mill-stones rolled, ploughing the pavement up,  
And hurling Sucking-Pigs into the air,  
With dust and stones.—

*Enter* MAMMON.

|                                                        |                                               |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Mammon.</i>                                         | I wonder that gray wizards                    | 340 |
| Like you should be so beardless in their schemes;      |                                               |     |
| It had been but a point of policy                      |                                               |     |
| To keep Iona and the Swine apart.                      |                                               |     |
| Divide and rule! but ye have made a junction           |                                               |     |
| Between two parties who will govern you                |                                               |     |
|                                                        | But for my art.—Behold this BAG! it is        | 345 |
| The poison BAG of that Green Spider huge,              |                                               |     |
| On which our spies skulked in ovation through          |                                               |     |
| The streets of Thebes, when they were paved with dead: |                                               |     |
|                                                        | A bane so much the deadlier fills it now      | 350 |
| As calumny is worse than death,—for here               |                                               |     |
| The Gadfly's venom, fifty times distilled,             |                                               |     |
| Is mingled with the vomit of the Leech,                |                                               |     |
| In due proportion, and black ratsbane, which           |                                               |     |
|                                                        | That very Rat, who, like the Pontic tyrant,   | 355 |
| Nurtures himself on poison, dare not touch;—           |                                               |     |
| All is sealed up with the broad seal of Fraud,         |                                               |     |
| Who is the Devil's Lord High Chancellor,               |                                               |     |
| And over it the Primate of all Hell                    |                                               |     |
|                                                        | Murmured this pious baptism:—'Be thou called  | 360 |
| The GREEN BAG; and this power and grace be thine:      |                                               |     |
| That thy contents, on whomsoever poured,               |                                               |     |
| Turn innocence to guilt, and gentlest looks            |                                               |     |
| To savage, foul, and fierce deformity.                 |                                               |     |
|                                                        | Let all baptized by thy infernal dew          | 365 |
| Be called adulterer, drunkard, liar, wretch!           |                                               |     |
| No name left out which orthodoxy loves,                |                                               |     |
| Court Journal or legitimate Review!—                   |                                               |     |
| Be they called tyrant, beast, fool, glutton, lover     |                                               |     |
|                                                        | Of other wives and husbands than their own—   | 370 |
| The heaviest sin on this side of the Alps!             |                                               |     |
| Wither they to a ghastly caricature                    |                                               |     |
| Of what was human!—let not man or beast                |                                               |     |
| Behold their face with unaverted eyes!                 |                                               |     |
|                                                        | Or hear their names with ears that tingle not | 375 |
| With blood of indignation, rage, and shame!—           |                                               |     |
| This is a perilous liquor;—good my Lords.—             |                                               |     |

[SWELLFOOT *approaches to touch the GREEN BAG.*

Beware! for God's sake, beware!—if you should break  
The seal, and touch the fatal liquor——

*Purganax.*

There,

Give it to me. I have been used to handle  
 All sorts of poisons. His dread Majesty  
 Only desires to see the colour of it. 380

*Mammon.* Now, with a little common sense, my Lords,  
 Only undoing all that has been done  
 (Yet so as it may seem we but confirm it), 385  
 Our victory is assured. We must entice  
 Her Majesty from the sty, and make the Pigs  
 Believe that the contents of the GREEN BAG  
 Are the true test of guilt or innocence.  
 And that, if she be guilty, 'twill transform her 390  
 To manifest deformity like guilt.  
 If innocent, she will become transfigured  
 Into an angel, such as they say she is;  
 And they will see her flying through the air,  
 So bright that she will dim the noonday sun; 395  
 Showering down blessings in the shape of comfits.  
 This, trust a priest, is just the sort of thing  
 Swine will believe. I'll wager you will see them  
 Climbing upon the thatch of their low sties,  
 With pieces of smoked glass, to watch her sail 400  
 Among the clouds, and some will hold the flaps  
 Of one another's ears between their teeth,  
 To catch the coming hail of comfits in.  
 You, Purganax, who have the gift o' the gab,  
 Make them a solemn speech to this effect: 405  
 I go to put in readiness the feast  
 Kept to the honour of our goddess Famine,  
 Where, for more glory, let the ceremony  
 Take place of the uglification of the Queen.

*Dakry (to SWELLFOOT).* I, as the keeper of your  
 sacred conscience,  
 Humbly remind your Majesty that the care 411  
 Of your high office, as Man-milliner  
 To red Bellona, should not be deferred.

*Purganax.* All part, in happier plight to meet again. [*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

## ACT II

SCENE I.—*The Public Sty. The BOARS in full Assembly.*

*Enter PURGANAX.*

*Purganax.* Grant me your patience, Gentlemen and Boars,  
 Ye, by whose patience under public burthens  
 The glorious constitution of these sties  
 Subsists, and shall subsist. The Lean-Pig rates

Grow with the growing populace of Swine, 5  
 The taxes, that true source of Piggishness  
 (How can I find a more appropriate term  
 To include religion, morals, peace, and plenty,  
 And all that fit Boeotia as a nation  
 To teach the other nations how to live?), 10  
 Increase with Piggishness itself; and still  
 Does the revenue, that great spring of all  
 The patronage, and pensions, and by-payments,  
 Which free-born Pigs regard with jealous eyes,  
 Diminish, till at length, by glorious steps, 15  
 All the land's produce will be merged in taxes,  
 And the revenue will amount to—nothing!  
 The failure of a foreign market for  
 Sausages, bristles, and blood-puddings,  
 And such home manufactures, is but partial; 20  
 And, that the population of the Pigs,  
 Instead of hog-wash, has been fed on straw  
 And water, is a fact which is—you know—  
 That is—it is a state-necessity—  
 Temporary, of course. Those impious Pigs, 25  
 Who, by frequent squeaks, have dared impugn  
 The settled Swellfoot system, or to make  
 Irreverent mockery of the genuflexions  
 Inculcated by the arch-priest, have been whipped  
 Into a loyal and an orthodox whine. 30  
 Things being in this happy state, the Queen  
 Iona——

[*A loud cry from the Pigs. 'She is innocent! most innocent!'*]

*Purganax.* That is the very thing that I was saying,  
 Gentlemen Swine; the Queen Iona being 35  
 Most innocent, no doubt, returns to Thebes,  
 And the lean Sows and Boars collect about her,  
 Wishing to make her think that we believe  
 (I mean those more substantial Pigs, who swill  
 Rich hog-wash, while the others mouth damp straw)  
 That she is guilty; thus, the Lean-Pig faction 40  
 Seeks to obtain that hog-wash, which has been  
 Your immemorial right, and which I will  
 Maintain you in to the last drop of——

*A Boar (interrupting him).* What  
 Does any one accuse her of?

*Purganax.* Why, no one 45  
 Makes *any* positive accusation;—but  
 There were hints dropped, and so the privy wizards  
 Conceived that it became them to advise  
 His Majesty to investigate their truth;—



Not for his own sake; he could be content  
 To let his wife play any pranks she pleased, 50  
 If, by that suffrance, *he* could please the Pigs;  
 But then he fears the morals of the Swine,  
 The Sows especially, and what effect  
 It might produce upon the purity and  
 Religion of the rising generation 55  
 Of Sucking-Pigs, if it could be suspected  
 That Queen Iona—— [A pause.]

*First Boar.* Well, go on; we long  
 To hear what she can possibly have done.

*Purganax.* Why, it is hinted, that a certain Bull—  
 Thus much is *known*:—the milk-white Bulls that feed 60  
 Beside Clitumnus and the crystal lakes  
 Of the Cisalpine mountains, in fresh dews  
 Of lotus-grass and blossoming asphodel  
 Sleeking their silken hair, and with sweet breath  
 Loading the morning winds until they faint 65  
 With living fragrance, are so beautiful!—  
 Well, *I* say nothing;—but Europa rode  
 On such a one from Asia into Crete,  
 And the enamoured sea grew calm beneath  
 His gliding beauty. And Pasiphae, 70  
 Iona's grandmother,——but *she* is innocent!  
 And that both you and I, and all assert.

*First Boar.* Most innocent!

*Purganax.* Behold this BAG; a bag——

*Second Boar.* Oh! no GREEN BAGS!! Jealousy's eyes are green,  
 Scorpions are green, and water-snakes, and efts, 75  
 And verdigris, and——

*Purganax.* Honourable Swine,  
 In Piggish souls can prepossessions reign?  
 Allow me to remind you, grass is green—  
 All flesh is grass;—no bacon but is flesh—  
 Ye are but bacon. This divining BAG 80  
 (Which is not green, but only bacon colour)  
 Is filled with liquor, which if sprinkled o'er  
 A woman guilty of——we all know what—  
 Makes her so hideous, till she finds one blind  
 She never can commit the like again. 85  
 If innocent, she will turn into an angel,  
 And rain down blessings in the shape of comfits  
 As she flies up to heaven. Now, my proposal  
 Is to convert her sacred Majesty  
 Into an angel (as I am sure we shall do), 90  
 By pouring on her head this mystic water. [Showing the Bag.  
 I know that she is innocent; I wish

Only to prove her so to all the world.

*First Boar.* Excellent, just, and noble Purganax.

*Second Boar.* How glorious it will be to see her Majesty 95  
Flying above our heads, her petticoats  
Streaming like—like—like—

*Third Boar.* Anything.

*Purganax.* Oh no!

But like a standard of an admiral's ship,  
Or like the banner of a conquering host,  
Or like a cloud dyed in the dying day, 100  
Unravell'd on the blast from a white mountain;  
Or like a meteor, or a war-steed's mane,  
Or waterfall from a dizzy precipice  
Scattered upon the wind.

*First Boar.* Or a cow's tail.

*Second Boar.* Or *anything*, as the learned Boar observed. 105

*Purganax.* Gentlemen Boars, I move a resolution,  
That her most sacred Majesty should be  
Invited to attend the feast of Famine,  
And to receive upon her chaste white body  
Dews of Apotheosis from this BAG. 110

[*A great confusion is heard of the PIGS OUT OF DOORS, which communicates itself to those within. During the first Strophe, the doors of the Sty are staved in, and a number of exceedingly lean PIGS and SOWS and BOARS rush in.*]

*Semichorus I.*

No! Yes!

*Semichorus II.*

Yes! No!

*Semichorus I.*

A law!

*Semichorus II.*

A flaw!

*Semichorus I.*

Porkers, we shall lose our wash, 115  
Or must share it with the Lean-Pigs!

*First Boar.*

Order! order! be not rash!  
Was there ever such a scene, Pigs!

*An old Sow (rushing in).*

I never saw so fine a dash  
Since I first began to wean Pigs. 120

*Second Boar (solemnly).*

The Queen will be an angel time enough.  
I vote, in form of an amendment, that  
Purganax rub a little of that stuff  
Upon his face.

*Purganax (his heart is seen to beat through his waistcoat).*

Gods! What would ye be at?

*Semichorus I.*

Purganax has plainly shown a 125  
Cloven foot and jackdaw feather.

*Semichorus II.*

I vote Swellfoot and Iona  
Try the magic test together;  
Whenever royal spouses bicker,  
Both should try the magic liquor. 130

*An old Boar (aside).*

A miserable state is that of Pigs,  
For if their drivers would tear caps and wigs,  
The Swine must bite each other's ear therefore.

*An old Sow (aside).*

A wretched lot Jove has assigned to Swine,  
Squabbling makes Pig-herds hungry, and they dine 135  
On bacon, and whip Sucking-Pigs the more.

*Chorus.*

Hog-wash has been ta'en away:  
If the Bull-Queen is divested,  
We shall be in every way  
Hunted, stripped, exposed, molested; 140  
Let us do whate'er we may,  
That she shall not be arrested.

QUEEN, we entrench you with walls of brawn,  
And palisades of tusks, sharp as a bayonet:  
Place your most sacred person here. We pawn 145  
Our lives that none a finger dare to lay on it.

Those who wrong you, wrong us;  
 Those who hate you, hate us;  
 Those who sting you, sting us;  
 Those who bait you, bait us; 150  
 The *oracle* is now about to be  
 Fulfilled by circumvolving destiny;  
 Which says: 'Thebes, choose *reform* or *civil war*,  
 When through your streets, instead of hare with dogs,  
 A CONSORT QUEEN shall hunt a KING with Hogs, 155  
 Riding upon the IONIAN MINOTAUR.'

*Enter IONA TAURINA.*

*Iona Taurina (coming forward).* Gentlemen Swine, and gentle  
 Lady-Pigs,

The tender heart of every Boar acquits  
 Their QUEEN, of any act incongruous  
 With native Piggishness, and she, reposing 160  
 With confidence upon the grunting nation,  
 Has thrown herself, her cause, her life, her all,  
 Her innocence, into their Hoggish arms;  
 Nor has the expectation been deceived  
 Of finding shelter there. Yet know, great Boars, 165  
 (For such whoever lives among you finds you,  
 And so do I), the innocent are proud!  
 I have accepted your protection only  
 In compliment of your kind love and care,  
 Not for necessity. The innocent 170  
 Are safest there where trials and dangers wait;  
 Innocent Queens o'er white-hot ploughshares tread  
 Unsinged, and ladies, Erin's laureate sings it,<sup>1</sup>  
 Decked with rare gems, and beauty rarer still,  
 Walked from Killarney to the Giant's Causeway, 175  
 Through rebels, smugglers, troops of yeomanry,  
 White-boys and Orange-boys, and constables,  
 Tithe-proctors, and excise people, uninjured!  
 Thus I!——

Lord PURGANAX, I do commit myself 180  
 Into your custody, and am prepared  
 To stand the test, whatever it may be!

*Purganax.* This magnanimity in your sacred Majesty  
 Must please the Pigs. You cannot fail of being  
 A heavenly angel. Smoke your bits of glass, 185  
 Ye loyal Swine, or her transfiguration  
 Will blind your wondering eyes.

*An old Boar (aside).* Take care, my Lord,

<sup>1</sup> 'Rich and rare were the gems she wore.' See Moore's *Irish Melodies*.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

They do not smoke you first.

*Purganax.*

At the approaching feast

Of Famine, let the expiation be.

*Swine.* Content! content!

*Iona Taurina (aside).* I, most content of all,

190

Know that my foes even thus prepare their fall! [*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE II.—*The interior of the Temple of Famine. The statue of the Goddess, a skeleton clothed in parti-coloured rags, seated upon a heap of skulls and loaves intermingled. A number of exceedingly fat Priests in black garments arrayed on each side, with marrow-bones and cleavers in their hands. [SOLOMON, the Court Porkman.] A flourish of trumpets.*

*Enter* MAMMON *as arch-priest*, SWELLFOOT, DAKRY, PURGANAX, LAOC-  
TONOS, *followed by* IONA TAURINA *guarded. On the other side enter*  
*the* SWINE.

*Chorus of* PRIESTS, *accompanied by the* COURT PORKMAN *on*  
*marrow-bones and cleavers.*

GODDESS bare, and gaunt, and pale,

Empress of the world, all hail!

What though Cretans old called thee

City-crested Cybele?

We call thee FAMINE!

5

Goddess of fasts and feasts, starving and cramming!

Through thee, for emperors, kings, and priests and lords,

Who rule by viziers, sceptres, bank-notes, words,

The earth pours forth its plenteous fruits,

Corn, wool, linen, flesh, and roots—

10

Those who consume these fruits through thee grow fat,

Those who produce these fruits through thee grow lean,

Whatever change takes place, oh, stick to that!

And let things be as they have ever been;

At least while we remain thy priests,

15

And proclaim thy fasts and feasts.

Through thee the sacred SWELLFOOT dynasty

Is based upon a rock amid that sea

Whose waves are Swine—so let it ever be!

[*SWELLFOOT, etc., seat themselves at a table magnificently covered at the upper end of the Temple. Attendants pass over the stage with hog-wash in pails. A number of PIGS, exceedingly lean, follow them licking up the wash.*]

*Mammon.* I fear your sacred Majesty has lost

20

The appetite which you were used to have.

Allow me now to recommend this dish—

A simple kickshaw by your Persian cook,  
 Such as is served at the great King's second table.  
 The price and pains which its ingredients cost 25  
 Might have maintained some dozen families  
 A winter or two—not more—so plain a dish  
 Could scarcely disagree.—

*Swellfoot.* After the trial,  
 And these fastidious Pigs are gone, perhaps  
 I may recover my lost appetite,— 30  
 I feel the gout flying about my stomach—  
 Give me a glass of Maraschino punch.

*Purganax* (*filling his glass, and standing up*). The glorious  
 Constitution of the Pigs!

*All.* A toast! a toast! stand up, and three times three!

*Dakry.* No heel-taps—darken daylight!—

*Laoctonos.* Claret, somehow, 35  
 Puts me in mind of blood, and blood of claret!

*Swellfoot.* Laoctonos is fishing for a compliment,  
 But 'tis his due. Yes, you have drunk more wine,  
 And shed more blood, than any man in Thebes.

[*To PURGANAX.*  
 For God's sake stop the grunting of those Pigs! 40

*Purganax.* We dare not, Sire, 'tis Famine's privilege.

*Chorus of Swine.*

Hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!  
 Thy throne is on blood, and thy robe is of rags;  
 Thou devil which livest on damning;  
 Saint of new churches, and cant, and GREEN BAGS, 45  
 Till in pity and terror thou risest,  
 Confounding the schemes of the wisest;  
 When thou liftest thy skeleton form,  
 When the loaves and the skulls roll about,  
 We will greet thee—the voice of a storm 50  
 Would be lost in our terrible shout!

Then hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!  
 Hail to thee, Empress of Earth!  
 When thou risest, dividing possessions;  
 When thou risest, uprooting oppressions, 55  
 In the pride of thy ghastly mirth;  
 Over palaces, temples, and graves,  
 We will rush as thy minister-slaves,  
 Trampling behind in thy train,  
 Till all be made level again! 60

*Mammon.* I hear a crackling of the giant bones  
 Of the dread image, and in the black pits

Which once were eyes, I see two livid flames.

These prodigies are oracular, and show

The presence of the unseen Deity.

65

Mighty events are hastening to their doom!

*Swellfoot.* I only hear the lean and mutinous Swine  
Grunting about the temple.

*Dakry.* In a crisis  
Of such exceeding delicacy, I think

We ought to put her Majesty, the QUEEN,

70

Upon her trial without delay.

*Mammon.* THE BAG  
Is here.

*Purganax.* I have rehearsed the entire scene

With an ox-bladder and some ditchwater,

On Lady P——; it cannot fail. (*Taking up the Bag.*) Your  
Majesty [To SWELLFOOT.

75

In such a filthy business had better

Stand on one side, lest it should sprinkle you.

A spot or two on me would do no harm,

Nay, it might hide the blood, which the sad Genius

Of the Green Isle has fixed, as by a spell,

Upon my brow—which would stain all its seas,

80

But which those seas could never wash away!

*Iona Taurina.* My Lord, I am ready—nay, I am impatient  
To undergo the test.

[*A graceful figure in a semi-transparent veil passes unnoticed through the Temple; the word LIBERTY is seen through the veil, as if it were written in fire upon its forehead. Its words are almost drowned in the furious grunting of the PIGS, and the business of the trial. She kneels on the steps of the Altar, and speaks in tones at first faint and low, but which ever become louder and louder.*

Mighty Empress! Death's white wife!

Ghastly mother-in-law of Life!

85

By the God who made thee such,

By the magic of thy touch,

By the starving and the cramming

Of fasts and feasts! by thy dread self, O Famine!

I charge thee! when thou wake the multitude,

90

Thou lead them not upon the paths of blood.

The earth did never mean her foison

For those who crown life's cup with poison

Of fanatic rage and meaningless revenge—

But for those radiant spirits, who are still

95

The standard-bearers in the van of Change.

Be they th' appointed stewards, to fill

The lap of Pain, and Toil, and Age!—  
 Remit, O Queen! thy accustomed rage!  
 Be what thou art not! In voice faint and low 100  
 FREEDOM calls *Famine*,—her eternal foe,  
 To brief alliance, hollow truce.—Rise now!

[*Whilst the Veiled Figure has been chanting this strophe, MAMMON, DAKRY, LAOCTONOS, and SWELLFOOT have surrounded IONA TAURINA, who, with her hands folded on her breast, and her eyes lifted to Heaven, stands, as with saint-like resignation, to await the issue of the business, in perfect confidence of her innocence.*

[*PURGANAX, after unsealing the GREEN BAG, is gravely about to pour the liquor upon her head, when suddenly the whole expression of her figure and countenance changes; she snatches it from his hand with a loud laugh of triumph, and empties it over SWELLFOOT and his whole Court, who are instantly changed into a number of filthy and ugly animals, and rush out of the Temple. The image of FAMINE then arises with a tremendous sound, the PIGS begin scrambling for the loaves, and are tripped up by the skulls; all those who EAT the loaves are turned into BULLS, and arrange themselves quietly behind the altar. The image of FAMINE sinks through a chasm in the earth, and a MINOTAUR rises.*

*Minotaur.* I am the Ionian Minotaur, the mightiest  
 Of all Europa's taurine progeny—  
 I am the old traditional Man-Bull; 105  
 And from my ancestors having been Ionian,  
 I am called Ion, which, by interpretation,  
 Is JOHN; in plain Theban, that is to say,  
 My name's JOHN BULL; I am a famous hunter,  
 And can leap any gate in all Boeotia, 110  
 Even the palings of the royal park,  
 Or double ditch about the new enclosures;  
 And if your Majesty will deign to mount me,  
 At least till you have hunted down your game,  
 I will not throw you. 115

*Iona Taurina.* (*During this speech she has been putting on boots and spurs, and a hunting-cap, buckishly cocked on one side, and tucking up her hair, she leaps nimbly on his back.*) Hoa! hoa! tallyho! tallyho! ho! ho!

Come, let us hunt these ugly badgers down,  
 These stinking foxes, these devouring otters,  
 These hares, these wolves, these anything but men.  
 Hey, for a whipper-in! my loyal Pigs,  
 Now let your noses be as keen as beagles', 120  
 Your steps as swift as greyhounds', and your cries



More dulcet and symphonious than the bells  
 Of village-towers, on sunshine holiday;  
 Wake all the dewy woods with jangling music.  
 Give them no law (are they not beasts of blood?) 125  
 But such as they gave you. Tallyho! ho!  
 Through forest, furze, and bog, and den, and desert,  
 Pursue the ugly beasts! tallyho! ho!

*Full Chorus of IONA and the SWINE.*

Tallyho! tallyho!  
 Through rain, hail, and snow, 130  
 Through brake, gorse, and briar,  
 Through fen, flood, and mire,  
 We go! we go!

Tallyho! tallyho!  
 Through pond, ditch, and slough, 135  
 Wind them, and find them,  
 Like the Devil behind them,  
 Tallyho! tallyho!

[*Exeunt, in full cry; IONA driving on the SWINE, with the empty GREEN BAG.*]

THE END.

#### NOTE ON OEDIPUS TYRANNUS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

IN the brief journal I kept in those days, I find recorded, in August, 1820, Shelley 'begins *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, suggested by the pigs at the fair of San Giuliano.' This was the period of Queen Caroline's landing in England, and the struggles made by George IV to get rid of her claims; which failing, Lord Castlereagh placed the '*Green Bag*' on the table of the House of Commons, demanding in the King's name that an inquiry should be instituted into his wife's conduct. These circumstances were the theme of all conversation among the English. We were then at the Baths of San Giuliano. A friend came to visit us on the day when a fair was held in the square, beneath our windows: Shelley read to us his *Ode to Liberty*; and was riotously accompanied by the grunting of a quantity of pigs brought for sale to the fair. He compared it to the 'chorus of frogs' in the satiric drama of Aristophanes; and, it being an hour of merriment, and one ludicrous association suggesting another, he imagined a political-satirical drama on the circumstances of the day, to which the pigs would serve as chorus—and *Swellfoot* was begun. When finished, it was transmitted to England, printed, and published anonymously; but stifled at the very dawn of its existence by the Society for the Suppression of Vice, who threatened to prosecute it, if not immediately withdrawn. The friend who had taken the trouble of bringing it out, of course did

not think it worth the annoyance and expense of a contest, and it was laid aside.

Hesitation of whether it would do honour to Shelley prevented my publishing it at first. But I cannot bring myself to keep back anything he ever wrote; for each word is fraught with the peculiar views and sentiments which he believed to be beneficial to the human race, and the bright light of poetry irradiates every thought. The world has a right to the entire compositions of such a man; for it does not live and thrive by the outworn lesson of the dullard or the hypocrite, but by the original free thoughts of men of genius, who aspire to pluck bright truth

‘from the pale-faced moon;  
Or dive into the bottom of the deep  
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,  
And pluck up drowned’

truth. Even those who may dissent from his opinions will consider that he was a man of genius, and that the world will take more interest in his slightest word than in the waters of Lethe which are so eagerly prescribed as medicinal for all its wrongs and woe. This drama, however, must not be judged for more than was meant. It is a mere plaything of the imagination; which even may not excite smiles among many, who will not see wit in those combinations of thought which were full of the ridiculous to the author. But, like everything he wrote, it breathes that deep sympathy for the sorrows of humanity, and indignation against its oppressors, which make it worthy of his name.

## CHARLES THE FIRST

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING CHARLES I.  
QUEEN HENRIETTA.  
LAUD, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*  
WENTWORTH, *Earl of Strafford.*  
LORD COTTINGTON.  
LORD WESTON.  
LORD COVENTRY.  
WILLIAMS, *Bishop of Lincoln.*  
*Secretary* LYTTTELTON.  
JUXON.

ST. JOHN.  
ARCHY, *the Court Fool.*  
HAMPDEN.  
PYM.  
CROMWELL.  
CROMWELL'S DAUGHTER.  
SIR HARRY VANE *the younger.*  
LEIGHTON.  
BASTWICK.  
PRYNNE.

*Gentlemen of the Inns of Court, Citizens, Pursuivants, Marshalsmen,  
Law Students, Judges, Clerk.*

#### SCENE I.—*The Masque of the Inns of Court.*

*A Pursuivant.* Place, for the Marshal of the Masque!

*First Citizen.* What thinkest thou of this quaint masque which turns,  
Like morning from the shadow of the night,

The night to day, and London to a place  
Of peace and joy?

*Second Citizen.* And Hell to Heaven.

Eight years are gone,  
And they seem hours, since in this populous street  
I trod on grass made green by summer's rain,  
For the red plague kept state within that palace  
Where now that vanity reigns. In nine years more  
The roots will be refreshed with civil blood;  
And thank the mercy of insulted Heaven  
That sin and wrongs wound, as an orphan's cry,  
The patience of the great Avenger's ear.

*A Youth.* Yet, father, 'tis a happy sight to see,  
Beautiful, innocent, and unforbidden  
By God or man;—'tis like the bright procession  
Of skiey visions in a solemn dream  
From which men wake as from a Paradise,  
And draw new strength to tread the thorns of life.  
If God be good, wherefore should this be evil?  
And if this be not evil, dost thou not draw  
Unseasonable poison from the flowers  
Which bloom so rarely in this barren world?  
Oh, kill these bitter thoughts which make the present  
Dark as the future!—

When Avarice and Tyranny, vigilant Fear,  
And open-eyed Conspiracy lie sleeping  
As on Hell's threshold; and all gentle thoughts  
Waken to worship Him who giveth joys  
With His own gift.

*Second Citizen.* How young art thou in this old age of time!  
How green in this gray world? Canst thou discern  
The signs of seasons, yet perceive no hint  
Of change in that stage-scene in which thou art  
Not a spectator but an actor? or  
Art thou a puppet moved by [enginery]?  
The day that dawns in fire will die in storms,  
Even though the noon be calm. My travel's done,—  
Before the whirlwind wakes I shall have found  
My inn of lasting rest; but thou must still  
Be journeying on in this inclement air.  
Wrap thy old cloak about thy back;  
Nor leave the broad and plain and beaten road,  
Although no flowers smile on the trodden dust,  
For the violent paths of pleasure. This Charles the First  
Rose like the equinoctial sun, . . .

By vapours, through whose threatening ominous veil  
 Darting his altered influence he has gained  
 This height of noon—from which he must decline 50  
 Amid the darkness of conflicting storms,  
 To dank extinction and to latest night . . .

There goes

The apostate Strafford; he whose titles  
 whispered aphorisms 55

From Machiavel and Bacon: and, if Judas  
 Had been as brazen and as bold as he——

That

*First Citizen.*  
 Is the Archbishop.

*Second Citizen.* Rather say the Pope:  
 London will be soon his Rome: he walks  
 As if he trod upon the heads of men: 60  
 He looks elate, drunken with blood and gold;—  
 Beside him moves the Babylonian woman  
 Invisibly, and with her as with his shadow,  
 Mitred adulterer! he is joined in sin,  
 Which turns Heaven's milk of mercy to revenge. 65

*Third Citizen (lifting up his eyes).* Good Lord! rain it down upon  
 him! . . .

Amid her ladies walks the papist queen,  
 As if her nice feet scorned our English earth.  
 The Canaanitish Jezebel! I would be  
 A dog if I might tear her with my teeth! 70

There's old Sir Henry Vane, the Earl of Pembroke,  
 Lord Essex, and Lord Keeper Coventry,  
 And others who make base their English breed  
 By vile participation of their honours  
 With papists, atheists, tyrants, and apostates. 75  
 When lawyers masque 'tis time for honest men  
 To strip the vizor from their purposes.  
 A seasonable time for masquers this!

When Englishmen and Protestants should sit  
 dust on their dishonoured heads, 80

To avert the wrath of Him whose scourge is felt  
 For the great sins which have drawn down from Heaven  
 and foreign overthrow.

The remnant of the martyred saints in Rochefort  
 Have been abandoned by their faithless allies 85  
 To that idolatrous and adulterous torturer  
 Lewis of France,—the Palatinate is lost——

*Enter LEIGHTON (who has been branded in the face) and BASTWICK.*

Canst thou be—art thou——?

*Leighton.*

*I was Leighton: what*

I *am* thou seest. And yet turn thine eyes,  
And with thy memory look on thy friend's mind,  
Which is unchanged, and where is written deep  
The sentence of my judge. 90

*Third Citizen.* Are these the marks with which  
Laud thinks to improve the image of his Maker  
Stamped on the face of man? Curses upon him,  
The impious tyrant!

*Second Citizen.* It is said besides 95  
That lewd and papist drunkards may profane  
The Sabbath with their  
And has permitted that most heathenish custom  
Of dancing round a pole dressed up with wreaths  
On May-day. 100

A man who thus twice crucifies his God  
May well his brother.—In my mind, friend,  
The root of all this ill is prelacy.  
I would cut up the root.

*Third Citizen.* And by what means?

*Second Citizen.* Smiting each Bishop under the fifth rib. 105

*Third Citizen.* You seem to know the vulnerable place  
Of these same crocodiles.

*Second Citizen.* I learnt it in  
Egyptian bondage, sir. Your worm of Nile  
Betrays not with its flattering tears like they;  
For, when they cannot kill, they whine and weep. 110  
Nor is it half so greedy of men's bodies  
As they of soul and all; nor does it wallow  
In slime as they in simony and lies  
And close lusts of the flesh.

*A Marshalsman.* Give place, give place!  
You torch-bearers, advance to the great gate, 115  
And then attend the Marshal of the Masque  
Into the Royal presence.

*A Law Student.* What thinkest thou  
Of this quaint show of ours, my agèd friend?  
Even now we see the redness of the torches  
Inflame the night to the eastward, and the clarions 120  
[Gasp?] to us on the wind's wave. It comes!  
And their sounds, floating hither round the pageant,  
Rouse up the astonished air.

*First Citizen.* I will not think but that our country's wounds  
May yet be healed. The king is just and gracious, 125  
Though wicked counsels now pervert his will:  
These once cast off—

*Second Citizen.* As adders cast their skins  
And keep their venom, so kings often change;

Councils and counsellors hang on one another,  
 Hiding the loathsome 130  
 Like the base patchwork of a leper's rags.

*The Youth.* Oh, still those dissonant thoughts!—List how the music  
 Grows on the enchanted air! And see, the torches  
 Restlessly flashing, and the crowd divided  
 Like waves before an admiral's prow!

*A Marshalsman.* Give place 135  
 To the Marshal of the Masque!

*A Pursuivant.* Room for the King!  
*The Youth.* How glorious! See those thronging chariots

Rolling, like painted clouds before the wind,  
 Behind their solemn steeds: how some are shaped  
 Like curved sea-shells dyed by the azure depths 140  
 Of Indian seas; some like the new-born moon;  
 And some like cars in which the Romans climbed  
 (Canopied by Victory's eagle-wings outspread)

The Capitolian—See how gloriously  
 The mettled horses in the torchlight stir 145  
 Their gallant riders, while they check their pride,  
 Like shapes of some diviner element  
 Than English air, and beings nobler than  
 The envious and admiring multitude.

*Second Citizen.* Ay, there they are— 150  
 Nobles, and sons of nobles, patentees,  
 Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm,  
 On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows,  
 Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan,  
 Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart. 155

These are the lilies glorious as Solomon,  
 Who toil not, neither do they spin,—unless  
 It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal.  
 Here is the surfeit which to them who earn  
 The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves 160  
 The tithe that will support them till they crawl  
 Back to her cold hard bosom. Here is health  
 Followed by grim disease, glory by shame,

Waste by lame famine, wealth by squalid want,  
 And England's sin by England's punishment. 165  
 And, as the effect pursues the cause foregone,  
 Lo, giving substance to my words, behold  
 At once the sign and the thing signified—

A troop of cripples, beggars, and lean outcasts,  
 Horsed upon stumbling jades, carted with dung, 170  
 Dragged for a day from cellars and low cabins  
 And rotten hiding-places, to point the moral  
 Of this presentment, and bring up the rear

Of painted pomp with misery!

*The Youth.*

'Tis but

The anti-masque, and serves as discords do

175

In sweetest music. Who would love May flowers

If they succeeded not to Winter's flaw;

Or day unchanged by night; or joy itself

Without the touch of sorrow?

*Second Citizen.*

I and thou——

*A Marshalsman.* Place, give place!

180

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in Whitehall. Enter the KING, QUEEN, LAUD, LORD STRAFFORD, LORD COTTINGTON, and other Lords; ARCHY; also ST. JOHN, with some Gentlemen of the Inns of Court.*

*King.* Thanks, gentlemen. I heartily accept

This token of your service: your gay masque

Was performed gallantly. And it shows well

When subjects twine such flowers of [observance?]

With the sharp thorns that deck the English crown.

5

A gentle heart enjoys what it confers,

Even as it suffers that which it inflicts,

Though Justice guides the stroke.

Accept my hearty thanks.

*Queen.*

And gentlemen,

Call your poor Queen your debtor. Your quaint pageant

10

Rose on me like the figures of past years,

Treading their still path back to infancy,

More beautiful and mild as they draw nearer

The quiet cradle. I could have almost wept

To think I was in Paris, where these shows

15

Are well devised—such as I was ere yet

My young heart shared a portion of the burthen,

The careful weight of this great monarchy.

There, gentlemen, between the sovereign's pleasure

And that which it regards, no clamour lifts

20

Its proud interposition.

In Paris ribald censurers dare not move

Their poisonous tongues against these sinless sports;

And *his* smile

Warms those who bask in it, as ours would do

25

If . . . Take my heart's thanks: add them, gentlemen,

To those good words which, were he King of France,

My royal lord would turn to golden deeds.

*St. John.* Madam, the love of Englishmen can make

The lightest favour of their lawful king

30

Outweigh a despot's.—We humbly take our leaves,

Enriched by smiles which France can never buy.

[*Exeunt ST. JOHN and the Gentlemen of the Inns of Court.*]

*King.* My Lord Archbishop,  
Mark you what spirit sits in St. John's eyes?  
Methinks it is too saucy for this presence.

35

*Archy.* Yes, pray your Grace look: for, like an unsophisticated [eye] sees everything upside down, you who are wise will discern the shadow of an idiot in lawn sleeves and a rochet setting springes to catch woodcocks in haymaking time. Poor Archy, whose owl-eyes are tempered to the error of his age, and because he is a fool, and by special ordinance of God forbidden ever to see himself as he is, sees now in that deep eye a blindfold devil sitting on the ball, and weighing words out between king and subjects. One scale is full of promises, and the other full of protestations: and then another devil creeps behind the first out of the dark windings [of a] pregnant lawyer's brain, and takes the bandage from the other's eyes, and throws a sword into the left-hand scale, for all the world like my Lord Essex's there.

47

*Strafford.* A rod in pickle for the Fool's back!

*Archy.* Ay, and some are now smiling whose tears will make the brine; for the Fool sees——

*Strafford.* Insolent! You shall have your coat turned and be whipped out of the palace for this.

52

*Archy.* When all the fools are whipped, and all the Protestant writers, while the knaves are whipping the fools ever since a thief was set to catch a thief. If all turncoats were whipped out of palaces, poor Archy would be disgraced in good company. Let the knaves whip the fools, and all the fools laugh at it. [Let the] wise and godly slit each other's noses and ears (having no need of any sense of discernment in their craft); and the knaves, to marshal them, join in a procession to Bedlam, to entreat the madmen to omit their sublime Platonic contemplations, and manage the state of England. Let all the honest men who lie [pinched?] up at the prisons or the pillories, in custody of the pursuivants of the High-Commission Court, marshal them.

63

*Enter Secretary LYTTELTON, with papers.*

*King (looking over the papers).* These stiff Scots  
His Grace of Canterbury must take order  
To force under the Church's yoke.—You, Wentworth,  
Shall be myself in Ireland, and shall add  
Your wisdom, gentleness, and energy,  
To what in me were wanting.—My Lord Weston,  
Look that those merchants draw not without loss  
Their bullion from the Tower; and, on the payment  
Of shipmoney, take fullest compensation  
For violation of our royal forests,  
Whose limits, from neglect, have been o'ergrown  
With cottages and cornfields. The uttermost  
Farthing exact from those who claim exemption  
From knighthood: that which once was a reward

70

75



Shall thus be made a punishment, that subjects  
 May know how majesty can wear at will  
 The rugged mood.—My Lord of Coventry, 80  
 Lay my command upon the Courts below  
 That bail be not accepted for the prisoners  
 Under the warrant of the Star Chamber.  
 The people shall not find the stubbornness  
 Of Parliament a cheap or easy method 85  
 Of dealing with their rightful sovereign:  
 And doubt not this, my Lord of Coventry,  
 We will find time and place for fit rebuke.—  
 My Lord of Canterbury.

*Archy.* The fool is here.

*Laud.* I crave permission of your Majesty 90  
 To order that this insolent fellow be  
 Chastised: he mocks the sacred character,  
 Scoffs at the state, and—

*King.* What, my Archy?  
 He mocks and mimics all he sees and hears,  
 Yet with a quaint and graceful licence—Prithee 95  
 For this once do not as Prynne would, were he  
 Primate of England. With your Grace's leave,  
 He lives in his own world; and, like a parrot  
 Hung in his gilded prison from the window  
 Of a queen's bower over the public way, 100  
 Blasphemes with a bird's mind:—his words, like arrows  
 Which know no aim beyond the archer's wit,  
 Strike sometimes what eludes philosophy.—  
 (*To ARCHY.*) Go, sirrah, and repent of your offence  
 Ten minutes in the rain; be it your penance 105  
 To bring news how the world goes there.

[*Exit ARCHY.*

Poor Archy!

He weaves about himself a world of mirth  
 Out of the wreck of ours.

*Laud.* I take with patience, as my Master did,  
 All scoffs permitted from above.

*King.* My lord, 110  
 Pray overlook these papers. Archy's words  
 Had wings, but these have talons.

*Queen.* And the lion  
 That wears them must be tamed. My dearest lord,  
 I see the new-born courage in your eye  
 Armed to strike dead the Spirit of the Time, 115  
 Which spurs to rage the many-headed beast.  
 Do thou persist: for, faint but in resolve,  
 And it were better thou hadst still remained

The slave of thine own slaves, who tear like curs  
 The fugitive, and flee from the pursuer; 120  
 And Opportunity, that empty wolf,  
 Flies at his throat who falls. Subdue thy actions  
 Even to the disposition of thy purpose,  
 And be that tempered as the Ebro's steel;  
 And banish weak-eyed Mercy to the weak, 125  
 Whence she will greet thee with a gift of peace,  
 And not betray thee with a traitor's kiss,  
 As when she keeps the company of rebels,  
 Who think that she is Fear. This do, lest we  
 Should fall as from a glorious pinnacle 130  
 In a bright dream, and wake as from a dream  
 Out of our worshipped state.

*King.* Belovèd friend,  
 God is my witness that this weight of power,  
 Which He sets me my earthly task to wield  
 Under His law, is my delight and pride 135  
 Only because thou lovest that and me.  
 For a king bears the office of a God  
 To all the under world; and to his God  
 Alone he must deliver up his trust,  
 Unshorn of its permitted attributes. 140  
 [It seems] now as the baser elements  
 Had mutinied against the golden sun  
 That kindles them to harmony, and quells  
 Their self-destroying rapine. The wild million  
 Strike at the eye that guides them; like as humours 145  
 Of the distempered body that conspire  
 Against the spirit of life throned in the heart,—  
 And thus become the prey of one another,  
 And last of death.

*Strafford.* That which would be ambition in a subject  
 Is duty in a sovereign; for on him, 150  
 As on a keystone, hangs the arch of life,  
 Whose safety is its strength. Degree and form,  
 And all that makes the age of reasoning man  
 More memorable than a beast's, depend on this—  
 That Right should fence itself inviolably 155  
 With Power; in which respect the state of England  
 From usurpation by the insolent commons  
 Cries for reform.  
 Get treason, and spare treasure. Fee with coin  
 The loudest murmurers; feed with jealousies 160  
 Opposing factions,—be thyself of none;  
 And borrow gold of many, for those who lend  
 Will serve thee till thou payest them; and thus

Keep the fierce spirit of the hour at bay,  
Till time, and its coming generations  
Of nights and days unborn, bring some one chance,

165

Or war or pestilence or Nature's self,—  
By some distemperature or terrible sign,  
Be as an arbiter betwixt themselves.

Nor let your Majesty  
Doubt here the peril of the unseen event.

170

How did your brother Kirgs, coheritors  
In your high interest in the subject earth,  
Rise past such troubles to that height of power  
Where now they sit, and awfully serene

175

Smile on the trembling world? Such popular storms  
Philip the Second of Spain, this Lewis of France,  
And late the German head of many bodies,  
And every petty lord of Italy,  
Quelled or by arts or arms. Is England poorer  
Or feebler? or art thou who wield'st her power  
Tamer than they? or shall this island be—  
[Girdled] by its inviolable waters—

180

To the world present and the world to come  
Sole pattern of extinguished monarchy?  
Not if thou dost as I would have thee do.

185

*King.* Your words shall be my deeds:  
You speak the image of my thought. My friend  
(If Kings can have a friend, I call thee so),  
Beyond the large commission which [belongs]  
Under the great seal of the realm, take this:  
And, for some obvious reasons, let there be  
No seal on it, except my king'y word  
And honour as I am a gentleman.

190

Be—as thou art within my heart and mind—  
Another self, here and in Ireland:  
Do what thou judgest well, take amplest licence,  
And stick not even at questionable means.  
Hear me, Wentworth. My word is as a wall  
Between thee and this world thine enemy—  
That hates thee, for thou lovest me.

195

200

*Strafford.* I own  
No friend but thee, no enemies but thine:  
Thy lightest thought is my eternal law.  
How weak, how short, is life to pay——

*King.* Peace, peace.  
Thou ow'st me nothing yet.  
(*To LAUD.*) My lord, what say  
Those papers?

205

*Laud.* Your Majesty has ever interposed,  
 In lenity towards your native soil,  
 Between the heavy vengeance of the Church  
 And Scotland. Mark the consequence of warming 210  
 This brood of northern vipers in your bosom.  
 The rabble, instructed no doubt  
 By Loudon, Lindsay, Hume, and false Argyll  
 (For the waves never menace heaven until  
 Scourged by the wind's invisible tyranny), 215  
 Have in the very temple of the Lord  
 Done outrage to His chosen ministers.  
 They scorn the liturgy of the Holy Church,  
 Refuse to obey her canons, and deny  
 The apostolic power with which the Spirit 220  
 Has filled its elect vessels, even from him  
 Who held the keys with power to loose and bind,  
 To him who now pleads in this royal presence.—  
 Let ample powers and new instructions be  
 Sent to the High Commissioners in Scotland. 225  
 To death, imprisonment, and confiscation,  
 Add torture, add the ruin of the kindred  
 Of the offender, add the brand of infamy,  
 Add mutilation: and if this suffice not,  
 Unleash the sword and fire, that in their thirst 230  
 They may lick up that scum of schismatics.  
 I laugh at those weak rebels who, desiring  
 What we possess, still prate of Christian peace,  
 As if those dreadful arbitrating messengers  
 Which play the part of God 'twixt right and wrong, 235  
 Should be let loose against the innocent sleep  
 Of templ'd cities and the smiling fields,  
 For some poor argument of policy  
 Which touches our own profit or our pride  
 (Where it indeed were Christian charity 240  
 To turn the cheek even to the smiter's hand);  
 And, when our great Redeemer, when our God,  
 When He who gave, accepted, and retained  
 Himself in propitiation of our sins,  
 Is scorned in His immediate ministry, 245  
 With hazard of the inestimable loss  
 Of all the truth and discipline which is  
 Salvation to the extremest generation  
 Of men innumerable, they talk of peace!  
 Such peace as Canaan found, let Scotland now;  
 For, by that Christ who came to bring a sword, 250  
 Not peace, upon the earth, and gave command  
 To His disciples at the Passover

That each should sell his robe and buy a sword,—  
Once strip that minister of naked wrath, 255  
And it shall never sleep in peace again  
Till Scotland bend or break.

*King.* My Lord Archbishop,  
Do what thou wilt and what thou canst in this.  
Thy earthly even as thy heavenly King  
Gives thee large power in his unquiet realm. 260  
But we want money, and my mind misgives me  
That for so great an enterprise, as yet,  
We are unfurnished.

*Strafford.* Yet it may not long  
Rest on our wills.

*Cottington.* The expenses  
Of gathering shipmoney, and of distraining 265  
For every petty rate (for we encounter  
A desperate opposition inch by inch  
In every warehouse and on every farm),  
Have swallowed up the gross sum of the imposts;  
So that, though felt as a most grievous scourge 270  
Upon the land, they stand us in small stead  
As touches the receipt.

*Strafford.* 'Tis a conclusion  
Most arithmetical: and thence you infer  
Perhaps the assembling of a parliament.  
Now, if a man should call his dearest enemies 275  
To sit in licensed judgement on his life,  
His Majesty might wisely take that course.

[*Aside to COTTINGTON.*

It is enough to expect from these lean imposts  
That they perform the office of a scourge,  
Without more profit. (*Aloud.*) Fines and confiscations, 280  
And a forced loan from the refractory city,  
Will fill our coffers: and the golden love  
Of loyal gentlemen and noble friends  
For the worshipped father of our common country,  
With contributions from the catholics, 285  
Will make Rebellion pale in our excess.  
Be these the expedients until time and wisdom  
Shall frame a settled state of government.

*Laud.* And weak expedients they! Have we not drained 290  
All, till the which seemed  
A mine exhaustless?

*Strafford.* And the love which is,  
If loyal hearts could turn their blood to gold.

*Laud.* Both now grow barren: and I speak it not  
As loving parliaments, which, as they have been

- In the right hand of bold bad mighty kings 295  
 The scourges of the bleeding Church, I hate.  
 Methinks they scarcely can deserve our fear.
- Strafford.* Oh! my dear liege, take back the wealth thou gavest:  
 With that, take all I held, but as in trust  
 For thee, of mine inheritance: leave me but 300  
 This unprovided body for thy service,  
 And a mind dedicated to no care  
 Except thy safety:—but assemble not  
 A parliament. Hundreds will bring, like me,  
 Their fortunes, as they would their blood, before—— 305
- King.* No! thou who judgest them art but one. Alas!  
 We should be too much out of love with Heaven,  
 Did this vile world show many such as thee,  
 Thou perfect, just, and honourable man!  
 Never shall it be said that Charles of England 310  
 Stripped those he loved for fear of those he scorns;  
 Nor will he so much misbecome his throne  
 As to impoverish those who most adorn  
 And best defend it. That you urge, dear *Strafford*,  
 Inclines me rather——
- Queen.* To a parliament? 315  
 Is this thy firmness? and thou wilt preside  
 Over a knot of censurers,  
 To the unswearing of thy best resolves,  
 And choose the worst, when the worst comes too soon?  
 Plight not the worst before the worst must come. 320  
 Oh, wilt thou smile whilst our ribald foes,  
 Dressed in their own usurped authority,  
 Sharpen their tongues on *Henrietta's* fame?  
 It is enough! Thou lovest me no more!
- King.* Oh, *Henrietta*! [Weeps.  
 [They talk apart. 325
- Cottington* (to *LAUD*). Money we have none:  
 And all the expedients of my Lord of *Strafford*  
 Will scarcely meet the arrears.
- Laud.* Without delay  
 An army must be sent into the north;  
 Followed by a Commission of the Church,  
 With amplest power to quench in fire and blood, 330  
 And tears and terror, and the pity of hell,  
 The intenser wrath of Heresy. God will give  
 Victory; and victory over Scotland give  
 The lion England tamed into our hands.  
 That will lend power, and power bring gold.
- Cottington.* Meanwhile 335  
 We must begin first where your Grace leaves off.  
 Gold must give power, or——

*Laud.*

I am not averse

From the assembling of a parliament.

Strong actions and smooth words might teach them soon

The lesson to obey. And are they not

340

A bubble fashioned by the monarch's mouth,

The birth of one light breath? If they serve no purpose,

A word dissolves them.

*Strafford.*

The engine of parliaments

Might be deferred until I can bring over

The Irish regiments: they will serve to assure

345

The issue of the war against the Scots.

And, this game won—which if lost, all is lost—

Gather these chosen leaders of the rebels,

And call them, if you will, a parliament.

*King.* Oh, be our feet still tardy to shed blood,

350

Guilty though it may be! I would still spare

The stubborn country of my birth, and ward

From countenances which I loved in youth

The wrathful Church's lacerating hand.

(*To LAUD.*) Have you o'erlooked the other articles?

355

[*Re-enter ARCHY.*

*Laud.* Hazlerig, Hampden, Pym, young Harry Vane,

Cromwell, and other rebels of less note,

Intend to sail with the next favouring wind

For the Plantations.

*Archy.*

Where they think to found

A commonwealth like Gonzalo's in the play,

360

Gynaecocoeonic and pantisocratic.

*King.* What's that, sirrah?

*Archy.*

New devil's politics.

Hell is the pattern of all commonwealths:

Lucifer was the first republican.

Will you hear Merlin's prophecy, how three [posts?]

365

'In one brainless skull, when the whitethorn is full,

Shall sail round the world, and come back again:

Shall sail round the world in a brainless skull,

And come back again when the moon is at full:'—

When, in spite of the Church,

370

They will hear homilies of whatever length

Or form they please.

[*Cottington?*] So please your Majesty to sign this order

For their detention.

*Archy.* If your Majesty were tormented night and day by fever, gout, rheumatism, and stone, and asthma, etc., and you found these diseases had secretly entered into a conspiracy to abandon you, should you think it necessary to lay an embargo on the port by which they meant to dispeople your unquiet kingdom of man?

375

*King.* If fear were made for kings, the Fool mocks wisely;  
But in this case—(*writing*). Here, my lord, take the warrant,  
And see it duly executed forthwith.—  
That imp of malice and mockery shall be punished. 383

[*Exeunt all but KING, QUEEN, and ARCHY.*]

*Archy.* Ay, I am the physician of whom Plato prophesied, who was to be accused by the confectioner before a jury of children, who found him guilty without waiting for the summing-up, and hanged him without benefit of clergy. Thus Baby Charles, and the Twelfth-night Queen of Hearts, and the overgrown schoolboy Cottington, and that little urchin Laud—who would reduce a verdict of ‘guilty, death,’ by famine, if it were impregnable by composition—all impannelled against poor Archy for presenting them bitter physic the last day of the holidays. 391

*Queen.* Is the rain over, sirrah?

*King.*

When it rains

And the sun shines, ’twill rain again to-morrow:

And therefore never smile till you’ve done crying. 394

*Archy.* But ’tis all over now: like the April anger of woman, the gentle sky has wept itself serene.

*Queen.* What news abroad? how looks the world this morning?

*Archy.* Gloriously as a grave covered with virgin flowers.  
There’s a rainbow in the sky. Let your Majesty look at it, for

‘A rainbow in the morning  
Is the shepherd’s warning;’

400

and the flocks of which you are the pastor are scattered among the mountain-tops, where every drop of water is a flake of snow, and the breath of May pierces like a January blast. 404

*King.* The sheep have mistaken the wolf for their shepherd, my poor boy; and the shepherd, the wolves for their watchdogs.

*Queen.* But the rainbow was a good sign, Archy: it says that the waters of the deluge are gone, and can return no more.

*Archy.* Ay, the salt-water one: but that of tears and blood must yet come down, and that of fire follow, if there be any truth in lies.—The rainbow hung over the city with all its shops, . . . and churches, from north to south, like a bridge of congregated lightning pieced by the masonry of heaven—like a balance in which the angel that distributes the coming hour was weighing that heavy one whose poise is now felt in the lightest hearts, before it bows the proudest heads under the meanest feet. 416

*Queen.* Who taught you this trash, sirrah?

*Archy.* A torn leaf out of an old book trampled in the dirt.—But for the rainbow. It moved as the sun moved, and . . . until the top of the Tower . . . of a cloud through its left-hand tip, and Lambeth Palace look as dark as a rock before the other. Methought I saw a crown figured upon one tip, and a mitre on the other. So, as I had heard treasures were found where the rainbow quenches its points upon the earth, I set off,



and at the Tower—— But I shall not tell your Majesty what I found close to the closet-window on which the rainbow had glimmered. 425

*King.* Speak: I will make my Fool my conscience.

*Archy.* Then conscience is a fool.—I saw there a cat caught in a rat-trap. I heard the rats squeak behind the wainscots: it seemed to me that the very mice were consulting on the manner of her death.

*Queen.* Archy is shrewd and bitter.

*Archy.* Like the season, 430

So blow the winds.—But at the other end of the rainbow, where the gray rain was tempered along the grass and leaves by a tender interfusion of violet and gold in the meadows beyond Lambeth, what think you that I found instead of a mitre?

*King.* Vane's wits perhaps.

*Archy.* Something as vain. I saw 435

a gross vapour hovering in a stinking ditch over the carcass of a dead ass, some rotten rags, and broken dishes—the wrecks of what once administered to the stuffing-out and the ornament of a worm of worms. His Grace of Canterbury expects to enter the New Jerusalem some Palm Sunday in triumph on the ghost of this ass. 440

*Queen.* Enough, enough! Go desire Lady Jane

She place my lute, together with the music

Mari received last week from Italy,

In my boudoir, and——

[*Exit ARCHY.*]

*King.* I'll go in.

*Queen.* My beloved lord,

Have you not noted that the Fool of late 445

Has lost his careless mirth, and that his words

Sound like the echoes of our saddest fears?

What can it mean? I should be loth to think

Some factious slave had tutored him.

*King.* Oh, no!

He is but Occasion's pupil. Partly 'tis 450

That our minds piece the vacant intervals

Of his wild words with their own fashioning,—

As in the imagery of summer clouds,

Or coals of the winter fire, idlers find

The perfect shadows of their teeming thoughts: 455

And partly, that the terrors of the time

Are sown by wandering Rumour in all spirits;

And in the lightest and the least, may best

Be seen the current of the coming wind.

*Queen.* Your brain is overwrought with these deep thoughts. 460

Come, I will sing to you; let us go try

These airs from Italy; and, as we pass

The gallery, we'll decide where that Correggio

Shall hang—the Virgin Mother

With her child, born the King of heaven and earth, 465  
 Whose reign is men's salvation. And you shall see  
 A cradled miniature of yourself asleep,  
 Stamped on the heart by never-erring love;  
 Likier than any Vandyke ever made,  
 A pattern to the unborn age of thee, 470  
 Over whose sweet beauty I have wept for joy  
 A thousand times, and now should weep for sorrow  
 Did I not think that after we were dead  
 Our fortunes would spring high in him, and that  
 The cares we waste upon our heavy crown 475  
 Would make it light and glorious as a wreath  
 Of Heaven's beams for his dear innocent brow.  
*King.* Dear Henrietta!

SCENE III.—*The Star Chamber*, LAUD, JUXON, STRAFFORD, and others,  
 as Judges. PRYNNE as a Prisoner, and then BASTWICK.

*Laud.* Bring forth the prisoner Bastwick: let the clerk  
 Recite his sentence.

*Clerk.* 'That he pay five thousand  
 Pounds to the king, lose both his ears, be branded  
 With red-hot iron on the cheek and forehead,  
 And be imprisoned within Lancaster Castle 5  
 During the pleasure of the Court.'

*Laud.* Prisoner,  
 If you have aught to say wherefore this sentence  
 Should not be put into effect, now speak.

*Juxon.* If you have aught to plead in mitigation,  
 Speak.

*Bastwick.* Thus, my lords. If, like the prelates, I 10  
 Were an invader of the royal power,  
 A public scorner of the word of God,  
 Profane, idolatrous, popish, superstitious,  
 Impious in heart and in tyrannic act,  
 Void of wit, honesty, and temperance; 15  
 If Satan were my lord, as theirs,—our God  
 Pattern of all I should avoid to do:  
 Were I an enemy of my God and King  
 And of good men, as ye are;—I should merit  
 Your fearful state and guilt prosperity, 20  
 Which, when ye wake from the last sleep, shall turn  
 To cowls and robes of everlasting fire.  
 But, as I am, I bid ye grudge me not  
 The only earthly favour ye can yield,  
 Or I think worth acceptance at your hands,— 25  
 Scorn, mutilation, and imprisonment.  
 even as my Master did,

Until Heaven's kingdom shall descend on earth,  
 Or earth be like a shadow in the light  
 Of Heaven absorbed—some few tumultuous years  
 Will pass, and leave no wreck of what opposes  
 His will whose will is power.

*Laud.* Officer, take the prisoner from the bar,  
 And be his tongue slit for his insolence.

*Bastwick.* While this hand holds a pen—

*Laud.* Be his hands—

*'uxon.* Stop! 35

Forbear, my lord! The tongue, which now can speak  
 No terror, would interpret, being dumb,  
 Heaven's thunder to our harm; . . .  
 And hands, which now write only their own shame,  
 With bleeding stumps might sign our blood away.

*Laud.* Much more such 'mercy' among men would be,  
 Did all the ministers of Heaven's revenge  
 Flinch thus from earthly retribution. I  
 Could suffer what I would inflict.

[*Exit BASTWICK guarded.*

Bring up

The Lord Bishop of Lincoln.—  
 (*THE STRAFFORD.*) Know you not 45  
 That, in distraining for ten thousand pounds  
 Upon his books and furniture at Lincoln,  
 Were found these scandalous and seditious letters  
 Sent from one Osbaldistone, who is fled?  
 I speak it not as touching this poor person; 50  
 But of the office which should make it holy,  
 Were it as vile as it was ever spotless.  
 Mark, too, my lord, that this expression strikes  
 His Majesty, if I misinterpret not.

*Enter BISHOP WILLIAMS guarded.*

*Strafford.* 'Twere politic and just that Williams taste 55  
 The bitter fruit of his connection with  
 The schismatics. But you, my Lord Archbishop,  
 Who owed your first promotion to his favour,  
 Who grew beneath his smile—

*Laud.* Would therefore beg 60  
 The office of his judge from this High Court,—  
 That it shall seem, even as it is, that I,  
 In my assumption of this sacred robe,  
 Have put aside all worldly preference,  
 All sense of all distinction of all persons,  
 All thoughts but of the service of the Church.— 65  
 Bishop of Lincoln!

*Williams.* Peace, proud hierarch!  
 I know my sentence, and I own it just.  
 Thou wilt repay me less than I deserve,  
 In stretching to the utmost

SCENE IV.—HAMPDEN, PYM, CROMWELL, *his Daughter, and young*  
 SIR HARRY VANE.

*Hampden.* England, farewell! thou, who hast been my cradle,  
 Shalt never be my dungeon or my grave!  
 I held what I inherited in thee  
 As pawn for that inheritance of freedom  
 Which thou hast sold for thy despoiler's smile: 5  
 How can I call thee England, or my country?—  
 Does the wind hold?

*Vane.* The vanes sit steady  
 Upon the Abbey towers. The silver lightnings  
 Of the evening star, spite of the city's smoke,  
 Tell that the north wind reigns in the upper air. 10  
 Mark too that flock of fleecy-wingèd clouds  
 Sailing athwart St. Margaret's.

*Hampden.* Hail, fleet herald  
 Of tempest! that rude pilot who shall guide  
 Hearts free as his, to realms as pure as thee,  
 Beyond the shot of tyranny, 15  
 Beyond the webs of that swoln spider . . .  
 Beyond the curses, calumnies, and [lies?]  
 Of atheist priests! And thou  
 Fair star, whose beam lies on the wide Atlantic,  
 Athwart its zones of tempest and of calm, 20  
 Bright as the path to a beloved home,  
 Oh, light us to the isles of the evening land!  
 Like floating Edens cradled in the glimmer  
 Of sunset, through the distant mist of years  
 Touched by departing hope, they gleam! lone regions, 25  
 Where Power's poor dupes and victims yet have never  
 Propitiated the savage fear of kings  
 With purest blood of noblest hearts; whose dew  
 Is yet unstained with tears of those who wake  
 To weep each day the wrongs on which it dawns; 30  
 Whose sacred silent air owns yet no echo  
 Of formal blasphemies; nor impious rites  
 Wrest man's free worship, from the God who loves,  
 To the poor worm who envies us His love!  
 Receive, thou young of Paradise. 35  
 These exiles from the old and sinful world!

This glorious clime, this firmament, whose lights  
 Dart mitigated influence through their veil  
 Of pale blue atmosphere; whose tears keep green  
 The pavement of this moist all-feeding earth; 40  
 This vaporous horizon, whose dim round  
 Is bastioned by the circumfluous sea,  
 Repelling invasion from the sacred towers,  
 Presses upon me like a dungeon's grate,  
 A low dark roof, a damp and narrow wall. 45  
 The boundless universe  
 Becomes a cell too narrow for the soul  
 That owns no master; while the loathliest ward  
 Of this wide prison, England, is a nest  
 Of cradling peace built on the mountain tops,— 50  
 To which the eagle spirits of the free,  
 Which range through heaven and earth, and scorn the storm  
 Of time, and gaze upon the light of truth,  
 Return to brood on thoughts that cannot die  
 And cannot be repelled. 55  
 Like eaglets floating in the heaven of time,  
 They soar above their quarry, and shall stoop  
 Through palaces and temples thunderproof.

SCENE V

*Archy.* I'll go live under the ivy that overgrows the terrace, and count the tears shed on its old [roots?] as the [wind?] plays the song of

'A widow bird sate mourning  
 Upon a wintry bough.'

[*Sings*]

'Heigho! the lark and the owl! 5  
 One flies the morning, and one lulls the night:—  
 Only the nightingale, poor fond soul,  
 Sings like the fool through darkness and light.

'A widow bird sate mourning for her love 10  
 Upon a wintry bough;  
 The frozen wind crept on above,  
 The freezing stream below.

'There was no leaf upon the forest bare,  
 No flower upon the ground,  
 And little motion in the air 15  
 Except the mill-wheel's sound.'

## LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE

LEGHORN, July 1, 1820.

THE spider spreads her webs, whether she be  
 In poet's tower, cellar, or barn, or tree;  
 The silk-worm in the dark green mulberry leaves  
 His winding sheet and cradle ever weaves;  
 So I, a thing whom moralists call worm, 5  
 Sit spinning still round this decaying form,  
 From the fine threads of rare and subtle thought—  
 No net of words in garish colours wrought  
 To catch the idle buzzers of the day—  
 But a soft cell, where when that fades away, 10  
 Memory may clothe in wings my living name  
 And feed it with the asphodels of fame,  
 Which in those hearts which must remember me  
 Grow, making love an immortality.

Whoever should behold me now, I wist, 15  
 Would think I were a mighty mechanist,  
 Bent with sublime Archimedean art  
 To breathe a soul into the iron heart  
 Of some machine portentous, or strange gin,  
 Which by the force of figured spells might win 20  
 Its way over the sea, and sport therein;  
 For round the walls are hung dread engines, such  
 As Vulcan never wrought for Jove to clutch  
 Ixion or the Titan:—or the quick  
 Wit of that man of God, St. Dominic, 25  
 To convince Atheist, Turk, or Heretic,  
 Or those in philanthropic council met,  
 Who thought to pay some interest for the debt  
 They owed to Jesus Christ for their salvation,  
 By giving a faint foretaste of damnation 30  
 To Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser, and the rest  
 Who made our land an island of the blest.  
 When lamp-like Spain, who now relumes her fire  
 On Freedom's hearth, grew dim with Empire:—  
 With thumbscrews, wheels, with tooth and spike and jag, 35  
 Which fishers found under the utmost crag  
 Of Cornwall and the storm-encompassed isles,  
 Where to the sky the rude sea rarely smiles  
 Unless in treacherous wrath, as on the morn  
 When the exulting elements in scorn, 40

Satiated with destroyed destruction, lay  
Sleeping in beauty on their mangled prey,  
As panthers sleep;—and other strange and dread  
Magical forms the brick floor overspread,—  
Proteus transformed to metal did not make 45  
More figures, or more strange; nor did he take  
Such shapes of unintelligible brass,  
Or heap himself in such a horrid mass  
Of tin and iron not to be understood;  
And forms of unimaginable wood, 50  
To puzzle Tubal Cain and all his brood:  
Great screws, and cones, and wheels, and grooved blocks,  
The elements of what will stand the shocks  
Of wave and wind and time.—Upon the table  
More knacks and quips there be than I am able 55  
To catalogize in this verse of mine:—  
A pretty bowl of wood—not full of wine,  
But quicksilver; that dew which the gnomes drink  
When at their subterranean toil they swink,  
Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who 60  
Reply to them in lava—cry halloo!  
And call out to the cities o'er their head,—  
Roofs, towers, and shrines, the dying and the dead,  
Crash through the chinks of earth—and then all quaff  
Another rouse, and hold their sides and laugh. 65  
This quicksilver no gnome has drunk—within  
The walnut bowl it lies, veined and thin,  
In colour like the wake of light that stains  
The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains  
The inmost shower of its white fire—the breeze 70  
Is still—blue Heaven smiles over the pale seas,  
And in this bowl of quicksilver—for I  
Yield to the impulse of an infancy  
Outlasting manhood—I have made to float  
A rude idealism of a paper boat:— 75  
A hollow screw with cogs—Henry will know  
The thing I mean and laugh at me,—if so  
He fears not I should do more mischief.—Next  
Lie bills and calculations much perplexed,  
With steam-boats, frigates, and machinery quaint 80  
Traced over them in blue and yellow paint.  
Then comes a range of mathematical  
Instruments, for plans nautical and statical;  
A heap of rosin, a queer broken glass  
With ink in it;—a china cup that was 85  
What it will never be again, I think,—  
A thing from which sweet lips were wont to drink

The liquor doctors rail at—and which I  
 Will quaff in spite of them—and when we die  
 We'll toss up who died first of drinking tea, 90  
 And cry out,—‘Heads or tails?’ where’er we be.  
 Near that a dusty paint-box, some odd hooks,  
 A half-burnt match, an ivory block, three books,  
 Where conic sections, spherics, logarithms,  
 To great Laplace, from Saunderson and Sims, 95  
 Lie heaped in their harmonious disarray  
 Of figures,—disentangle them who may.  
 Baron de Tott’s Memoirs beside them lie,  
 And some odd volumes of old chemistry.  
 Near those a most inexplicable thing, 100  
 With lead in the middle—I’m conjecturing  
 How to make Henry understand; but no—  
 I’ll leave, as Spenser says, with many mo,  
 This secret in the pregnant womb of time,  
 Too vast a matter for so weak a rhyme. 105

And here like some weird Archimage sit I,  
 Plotting dark spells, and devilish enginery,  
 The self-impelling steam-wheels of the mind  
 Which pump up oaths from clergymen, and grind 110  
 The gentle spirit of our meek reviews  
 Into a powdery foam of salt abuse,  
 Ruffling the ocean of their self-content;—  
 I sit—and smile or sigh as is my bent,  
 But not for them—Libeccio rushes round  
 With an inconstant and an idle sound, 115  
 I heed him more than them—the thunder-smoke  
 Is gathering on the mountains, like a cloak  
 Folded athwart their shoulders broad and bare;  
 The ripe corn under the undulating air  
 Undulates like an ocean;—and the vines 120  
 Are trembling wide in all their trellised lines—  
 The murmur of the awakening sea doth fill  
 The empty pauses of the blast;—the hill  
 Looks hoary through the white electric rain,  
 And from the glens beyond, in sullen strain, 125  
 The interrupted thunder howls; above  
 One chasm of Heaven smiles, like the eye of Love  
 On the unquiet world;—while such things are,  
 How could one worth your friendship heed the war  
 Of worms? the shriek of the world’s carrion jays, 130  
 Their censure, or their wonder, or their praise?

You are not here! the quaint witch Memory sees,  
 In vacant chairs, your absent images,



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 439 |
| And points where once you sat, and now should be<br>But are not.—I demand if ever we                                                                                                                                                                                        | 135 |
| Shall meet as then we met;—and she replies,<br>Veiling in awe her second-sighted eyes;<br>'I know the past alone—but summon home<br>My sister Hope,—she speaks of all to come.'                                                                                             |     |
| But I, an old diviner, who knew well<br>Every false verse of that sweet oracle,<br>Turned to the sad enchantress once again,<br>And sought a respite from my gentle pain,<br>In citing every passage o'er and o'er                                                          | 140 |
| Of our communion—how on the sea-shore<br>We watched the ocean and the sky together,<br>Under the roof of blue Italian weather;<br>How I ran home through last year's thunder-storm,<br>And felt the transverse lightning linger warm<br>Upon my cheek—and how we often made | 145 |
| Feasts for each other, where good will outweighed<br>The frugal luxury of our country cheer,<br>As well it might, were it less firm and clear<br>Than ours must ever be;—and how we spun                                                                                    | 150 |
| A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun<br>Of this familiar life, which seems to be<br>But is not:—or is but quaint mockery<br>Of all we would believe, and sadly blame<br>The jarring and inexplicable frame<br>Of this wrong world:—and then anatomize                   | 155 |
| The purposes and thoughts of men whose eyes<br>Were closed in distant years;—or widely guess<br>The issue of the earth's great business,<br>When we shall be as we no longer are—                                                                                           | 160 |
| Like babbling gossips safe, who hear the war<br>Of winds, and sigh, but tremble not;—or how<br>You listened to some interrupted flow<br>Of visionary rhyme,—in joy and pain<br>Struck from the inmost fountains of my brain,<br>With little skill perhaps;—or how we sought | 165 |
| Those deepest wells of passion or of thought<br>Wrought by wise poets in the waste of years,<br>Staining their sacred waters with our tears;<br>Quenching a thirst ever to be renewed!<br>Or how I, wisest lady! then endued                                                | 170 |
| The language of a land which now is free,<br>And, winged with thoughts of truth and majesty,<br>Flits round the tyrant's sceptre like a cloud,<br>And bursts the peopled prisons, and cries aloud,                                                                          | 175 |

'My name is Legion!'—that majestic tongue 180  
 Which Calderon over the desert flung  
 Of ages and of nations; and which found  
 An echo in our hearts, and with the sound  
 Startled oblivion;—thou wert then to me  
 As is a nurse—when inarticulately 185  
 A child would talk as its grown parents do.  
 If living winds the rapid clouds pursue,  
 If hawks chase doves through the aethereal way,  
 Huntsmen the innocent deer, and beasts their prey,  
 Why should not we rouse with the spirit's blast 190  
 Out of the forest of the pathless past  
 These recollected pleasures?

You are now  
 In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow  
 At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore  
 Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more. 195  
 Yet in its depth what treasures! You will see  
 That which was Godwin,—greater none than he  
 Though fallen—and fallen on evil times—to stand  
 Among the spirits of our age and land,  
 Before the dread tribunal of *to come* 200  
 The foremost,—while Rebuke cowers pale and dumb.  
 You will see Coleridge—he who sits obscure  
 In the exceeding lustre and the pure  
 Intense irradiation of a mind,  
 Which, with its own internal lightning blind, 205  
 Flags wearily through darkness and despair—  
 A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,  
 A hooded eagle among blinking owls.—  
 You will see Hunt—one of those happy souls  
 Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom 210  
 This world would smell like what it is—a tomb;  
 Who is, what others seem; his room no doubt  
 Is still adorned with many a cast from Shout,  
 With graceful flowers tastefully placed about;  
 And coronals of bay from ribbons hung, 215  
 And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung;  
 The gifts of the most learned among some dozens  
 Of female friends, sisters-in-law, and cousins.  
 And there is he with his eternal puns,  
 Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns 220  
 Thundering for money at a poet's door;  
 Alas! it is no use to say, 'I'm poor!'  
 Or oft in graver mood, when he will look  
 Things wiser than were ever read in book,

Except in Shakespeare's wisest tenderness.— 225  
 You will see Hogg,—and I cannot express  
 His virtues,—though I know that they are great,  
 Because he locks, then barricades the gate  
 Within which they inhabit;—of his wit  
 And wisdom, you'll cry out when you are bit. 230  
 He is a pearl within an oyster shell,  
 One of the richest of the deep;—and there  
 Is English Peacock, with his mountain Fair,  
 Turned into a Flamingo;—that shy bird  
 That gleams i' the Indian air—have you not heard 235  
 When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,  
 His best friends hear no more of him?—but you  
 Will see him, and will like him too, I hope,  
 With the milk-white Snowdonian Antelope  
 Matched with this cameleopard—his fine wit 240  
 Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it;  
 A strain too learnèd for a shallow age,  
 Too wise for selfish bigots; let his page,  
 Which charms the chosen spirits of the time,  
 Fold itself up for the serener clime 245  
 Of years to come, and find its recompense  
 In that just expectation.—Wit and sense,  
 Virtue and human knowledge; all that might  
 Make this dull world a business of delight,  
 Are all combined in Horace Smith.—And these, 250  
 With some exceptions, which I need not tease  
 Your patience by descanting on,—are all  
 You and I know in London.

I recall

My thoughts, and bid you look upon the night. 255  
 As water does a sponge, so the moonlight  
 Fills the void, hollow, universal air—  
 What see you?—unpavilioned Heaven is fair,  
 Whether the moon, into her chamber gone,  
 Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan  
 Climbs with diminished beams the azure steep; 260  
 Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,  
 Piloted by the many-wandering blast,  
 And the rare stars rush through them dim and fast:—  
 All this is beautiful in every land.—  
 But what see you beside?—a shabby stand 265  
 Of Hackney coaches—a brick house or wall  
 Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl  
 Of our unhappy politics;—or worse—  
 A wretched woman reeling by, whose curse

Mixed with the watchman's, partner of her trade, 270  
 You must accept in place of serenade—  
 Or yellow-haired Pollonia murmuring  
 To Henry, some unutterable thing.  
 I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit  
 Built round dark caverns, even to the root 275  
 Of the living stems that feed them—in whose bowers  
 There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers;  
 Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn  
 Trembles not in the slumbering air, and borne  
 In circles quaint, and ever-changing dance, 280  
 Like winged stars the fire-flies flash and glance,  
 Pale in the open moonshine, but each one  
 Under the dark trees seems a little sun,  
 A meteor tamed; a fixed star gone astray  
 From the silver regions of the milky way;— 285  
 Afar the Contadino's song is heard,  
 Rude, but made sweet by distance—and a bird  
 Which cannot be the Nightingale, and yet  
 I know none else that sings so sweet as it  
 At this late hour;—and then all is still— 290  
 Now—Italy or London, which you will!

Next winter you must pass with me; I'll have  
 My house by that time turned into a grave  
 Of dead despondence and low-thoughted care,  
 And all the dreams which our tormentors are; 295  
 Oh! that Hunt, Hogg, Peacock, and Smith were there,  
 With everything belonging to them fair!—  
 We will have books, Spanish, Italian, Greek;  
 And ask one week to make another week  
 As like his father, as I'm unlike mine, 300  
 Which is not his fault, as you may divine.  
 Though we eat little flesh and drink no wine,  
 Yet let's be merry: we'll have tea and toast;  
 Custards for supper, and an endless host  
 Of syllabubs and jellies and mince-pies, 305  
 And other such lady-like luxuries,—  
 Feasting on which we will philosophize!  
 And we'll have fires out of the Grand Duke's wood,  
 To thaw the six weeks' winter in our blood.  
 And then we'll talk;—what shall we talk about? 310  
 Oh! there are themes enough for many a bout  
 Of thought-entangled descant;—as to nerves—  
 With cones and parallelograms and curves  
 I've sworn to strangle them if once they dare  
 To bother me—when you are with me there. 315

And they shall never more sip laudanum,  
 From Helicon or Himeros<sup>1</sup>;—well, come,  
 And in despite of God and of the devil,  
 We'll make our friendly philosophic revel  
 Outlast the leafless time; till buds and flowers  
 Warn the obscure inevitable hours,  
 Sweet meeting by sad parting to renew;—  
 'To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.'

## THE WITCH OF ATLAS

## TO MARY

(ON HER OBJECTING TO THE FOLLOWING POEM, UPON THE  
 SCORE OF ITS CONTAINING NO HUMAN INTEREST)

## I

How, my dear Mary,—are you critic-bitten  
 (For vipers kill, though dead) by some review,  
 That you condemn these verses I have written,  
 Because they tell no story, false or true?  
 What, though no mice are caught by a young kitten,  
 May it not leap and play as grown cats do,  
 Till its claws come? Prithee, for this one time,  
 Content thee with a visionary rhyme.

## II

What hand would crush the silken-wingèd fly,  
 The youngest of inconstant April's minions,  
 Because it cannot climb the purest sky,  
 Where the swan sings, amid the sun's dominions?  
 Not thine. Thou knowest 'tis its doom to die,  
 When Day shall hide within her twilight pinions  
 The lucent eyes, and the eternal smile,  
 Serene as thine, which lent it life awhile.

## III

To thy fair feet a wingèd Vision came,  
 Whose date should have been longer than a day,  
 And o'er thy head did beat its wings for fame,  
 And in thy sight its fading plumes display;  
 The watery bow burned in the evening flame,  
 But the shower fell, the swift Sun went his way--  
 And that is dead.—O, let me not believe  
 That anything of mine is fit to live!

<sup>1</sup> "Ιμερος, from which the river Himera was named, is, with some slight shade of difference, a synonym of Love.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

## IV

Wordsworth informs us he was nineteen years 25  
 Considering and retouching Peter Bell;  
 Watering his laurels with the killing tears  
 Of slow, dull care, so that their roots to Hell  
 Might pierce, and their wide branches blot the spheres  
 Of Heaven, with dewy leaves and flowers; this well 30  
 May be, for Heaven and Earth conspire to foil  
 The over-busy gardener's blundering toil.

## V

My Witch indeed is not so sweet a creature  
 As Ruth or Lucy, whom his graceful praise  
 Clothes for our grandsons—but she matches Peter, 35  
 Though he took nineteen years, and she three days  
 In dressing. Light the vest of flowing metre  
 She wears; he, proud as dandy with his stays,  
 Has hung upon his wiry limbs a dress  
 Like King Lear's 'looped and windowed raggedness.' 40

## VI

If you strip Peter, you will see a fellow  
 Scorched by Hell's hyperequatorial climate  
 Into a kind of a sulphureous yellow:  
 A lean mark, hardly fit to fling a rhyme at;  
 In shape a Scaramouch, in hue Othello. 45  
 If you unveil my Witch, no priest nor primate  
 Can shrive you of that sin,—if sin there be  
 In love, when it becomes idolatry.

## THE WITCH OF ATLAS

## I

BEFORE those cruel Twins, whom at one birth  
 Incestuous Change bore to her father Time, 50  
 Error and Truth, had hunted from the Earth  
 All those bright natures which adorned its prime,  
 And left us nothing to believe in, worth  
 The pains of putting into learnèd rhyme,  
 A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain 55  
 Within a cavern, by a secret fountain.

## II

Her mother was one of the Atlantides:  
 The all-beholding Sun had ne'er beholden  
 In his wide voyage o'er continents and seas  
 So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden 60

In the warm shadow of her loveliness;—

He kissed her with his beams, and made all golden  
The chamber of gray rock in which she lay—  
She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away.

## III

'Tis said, she first was changed into a vapour, 65

And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,  
Like splendour-wingèd moths about a taper,  
Round the red west when the sun dies in it:

And then into a meteor, such as caper 70  
On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit:

Then, into one of those mysterious stars  
Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars.

## IV

Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent  
Her bow beside the folding-star, and hidden 75  
With that bright sign the billows to indent

The sea-deserted sand—like children chidden,  
At her command they ever came and went—

Since in that cave a dewy splendour hidden  
Took shape and motion: with the living form 80  
Of this embodied Power, the cave grew warm.

## V

A lovely lady garmented in light

From her own beauty—deep her eyes, as are  
Two openings of unfathomable night

Seen through a Temple's cloven roof—her hair 85  
Dark—the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight,

Picturing her form; her soft smiles shone afar,  
And her low voice was heard like love, and drew  
All living things towards this wonder new.

## VI

And first the spotted cameleopard came, 90  
And then the wise and fearless elephant;

Then the sly serpent, in the golden flame  
Of his own volumes interwolved;—all gaunt  
And sanguine beasts her gentle looks made tame.

They drank before her at her sacred fount; 95  
And every beast of beating heart grew bold,  
Such gentleness and power even to behold.

## VII

The brinded lioness led forth her young,  
 That she might teach them how they should forego  
 Their inborn thirst of death; the pard unstrung  
 His sinews at her feet, and sought to know 100  
 With looks whose motions spoke without a tongue  
 How he might be as gentle as the doe.  
 The magic circle of her voice and eyes  
 All savage natures did imparadise.

## VIII

And old Silenus, shaking a green stick 105  
 Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew  
 Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick  
 Cicadae are, drunk with the noonday dew:  
 And Dryope and Faunus followed quick,  
 Teasing the God to sing them something new; 110  
 Till in this cave they found the lady lone,  
 Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.

## IX

And universal Pan, 'tis said, was there,  
 And though none saw him,—through the adamant  
 Of the deep mountains, through the trackless air, 115  
 And through those living spirits, like a want,  
 He passed out of his everlasting lair  
 Where the quick heart of the great world doth pant,  
 And felt that wondrous lady all alone,—  
 And she felt him, upon her emerald throne. 120

## X

And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,  
 And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks,  
 Who drives her white waves over the green sea,  
 And Ocean with the brine on his gray locks,  
 And quaint Priapus with his company, 125  
 All came, much wondering how the enwombèd rocks  
 Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth;—  
 Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.

## XI

The herdsmen and the mountain maidens came,  
 And the rude kings of pastoral Garamant— 130  
 Their spirits shook within them, as a flame  
 Stirred by the air under a cavern gaunt:



## THE WITCH OF ATLAS

417

Pigmies, and Polyphemes, by many a name,  
 Centaurs, and Satyrs, and such shapes as haunt  
 Wet clefts,—and lumps neither alive nor dead, 135  
 Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed.

### XII

For she was beautiful—her beauty made  
 The bright world dim, and everything beside  
 Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade:  
 No thought of living spirit could abide, 140  
 Which to her looks had ever been betrayed,  
 On any object in the world so wide,  
 On any hope within the circling skies,  
 But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.

### XIII

Which when the lady knew, she took her spindle 145  
 And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and three  
 Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle .  
 The clouds and waves and mountains with; and she  
 As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle  
 In the belated moon, wound skilfully; 150  
 And with these threads a subtle veil she wove—  
 A shadow for the splendour of her love.

### XIV

The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling  
 Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air,  
 Which had the power all spirits of compelling, 155  
 Folded in cells of crystal silence there;  
 Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling  
 Will never die—yet ere we are aware,  
 The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,  
 And the regret they leave remains alone. 160

### XV

And there lay Visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,  
 Each in its thin sheath, like a chrysalis,  
 Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint  
 With the soft burthen of intensest bliss.  
 It was its work to bear to many a saint 165  
 Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is,  
 Even Love's:—and others white, green, gray, and black,  
 And of all shapes—and each was at her beck.

## XVI

And odours in a kind of aviary  
 Of ever-blooming Eden-trees she kept, 170  
 Clipped in a floating net, a love-sick Fairy  
 Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet slept;  
 As bats at the wired window of a dairy,  
 They beat their vans; and each was an adept,  
 When loosed and missioned, making wings of winds, 175  
 To stir sweet thoughts or sad, in destined minds.

## XVII

And liquors clear and sweet, whose healthful might  
 Could medicine the sick soul to happy sleep,  
 And change eternal death into a night  
 Of glorious dreams—or if eyes needs must weep, 180  
 Could make their tears all wonder and delight,  
 She in her crystal vials did closely keep:  
 If men could drink of those clear vials, 'tis said  
 The living were not envied of the dead.

## XVIII

Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device, 185  
 The works of some Saturnian Archimage,  
 Which taught the expiations at whose price  
 Men from the Gods might win that happy age  
 Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice;  
 And which might quench the Earth-consuming rage 190  
 Of gold and blood—till men should live and move  
 Harmonious as the sacred stars above;

## XIX

And how all things that seem untameable,  
 Not to be checked and not to be confined,  
 Obey the spells of Wisdom's wizard skill; 195  
 Time, earth, and fire—the ocean and the wind,  
 And all their shapes—and man's imperial will;  
 And other scrolls whose writings did unbind  
 The inmost lore of Love—let the profane  
 Tremble to ask what secrets they contain. 200

## XX

And wondrous works of substances unknown,  
 To which the enchantment of her father's power  
 Had changed those ragged blocks of savage stone,  
 Were heaped in the recesses of her bower;

Carved lamps and chalices, and vials which shone

205

In their own golden beams—each like a flower,  
Out of whose depth a fire-fly shakes his light  
Under a cypress in a starless night.

## XXI

At first she lived alone in this wild home,

210

And her own thoughts were each a minister,  
Clothing themselves, or with the ocean foam,  
Or with the wind, or with the speed of fire,  
To work whatever purposes might come

Into her mind; such power her mighty Sire  
Had girt them with, whether to fly or run,  
Through all the regions which he shines upon.

215

## XXII

The Ocean-nymphs and Hamadryades,

Oreads and Naiads, with long weedy locks,  
Offered to do her bidding through the seas,

220

Under the earth, and in the hollow rocks,  
And far beneath the matted roots of trees,

And in the gnarlèd heart of stubborn oaks,  
So they might live for ever in the light  
Of her sweet presence—each a satellite.

## XXIII

‘This may not be,’ the wizard maid replied;

225

‘The fountains where the Naiades bedew  
Their shining hair, at length are drained and dried;

The solid oaks forget their strength, and strew  
Their latest leaf upon the mountains wide;

The boundless ocean like a drop of dew  
Will be consumed—the stubborn centre must  
Be scattered, like a cloud of summer dust.

230

## XXIV

‘And ye with them will perish, one by one;—

If I must sigh to think that this shall be,

If I must weep when the surviving Sun

235

Shall smile on your decay—oh, ask not me  
To love you till your little race is run;

I cannot die as ye must—over me  
Your leaves shall glance—the streams in which ye dwell  
Shall be my paths henceforth, and so—farewell!’—

240

## XXV

She spoke and wept:—the dark and azure well  
 Sparkled beneath the shower of her bright tears,  
 And every little circlet where they fell  
 Flung to the cavern-roof inconstant spheres  
 And intertangled lines of light:—a knell 245  
 Of sobbling voices came upon her ears  
 From those departing Forms, o'er the serene  
 Of the white streams and of the forest green.

## XXVI

All day the wizard lady sate aloof,  
 Spelling out scrolls of dread antiquity, 250  
 Under the cavern's fountain-lighted roof;  
 Or broidering the pictured poesy  
 Of some high tale upon her growing woof,  
 Which the sweet splendour of her smiles could dye  
 In hues outshining heaven—and ever she 255  
 Added some grace to the wrought poesy.

## XXVII

While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece  
 Of sandal wood, rare gums, and cinnamon;  
 Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is—  
 Each flame of it is as a precious stone 260  
 Dissolved in ever-moving light, and this  
 Belongs to each and all who gaze upon.  
 The Witch beheld it not, for in her hand  
 She held a woof that dimmed the burning brand.

## XXVIII

This lady never slept, but lay in trance 265  
 All night within the fountain—as in sleep.  
 Its emerald crags glowed in her beauty's glance;  
 Through the green splendour of the water deep  
 She saw the constellations reel and dance  
 Like fire-flies—and withal did ever keep 270  
 The tenour of her contemplations calm,  
 With open eyes, closed feet, and folded palm.

## XXIX

And when the whirlwinds and the clouds descended  
 From the white pinnacles of that cold hill,  
 She passed at dewfall to a space extended, 275  
 Where in a lawn of flowering asphodel

# THE WITCH OF ATLAS

451

Amid a wood of pines and cedars blended,  
 There yawned an inextinguishable well  
 Of crimson fire—full even to the brim,  
 And overflowing all the margin trim.

286

## XXX

Within the which she lay when the fierce war  
 Of wintry winds shook that innocuous liquor  
 In many a mimic moon and bearded star  
 O'er woods and lawns;—the serpent heard it flicker  
 In sleep, and dreaming still, he crept afar—  
 And when the windless snow descended thicker  
 Than autumn leaves, she watched it as it came  
 Melt on the surface of the level flame.

285

## XXXI

She had a boat, which some say Vulcan wrought  
 For Venus, as the chariot of her star;  
 But it was found too feeble to be fraught  
 With all the ardours in that sphere which are,  
 And so she sold it, and Apollo bought  
 And gave it to this daughter: from a car  
 Changed to the fairest and the lightest boat  
 Which ever upon mortal stream did float.

290

295

## XXXII

And others say, that, when but three hours old,  
 The first-born Love out of his cradle leapt,  
 And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold,  
 And like a horticultural adept,  
 Stole a strange seed, and wrapped it up in mould,  
 And sowed it in his mother's star, and kept  
 Watering it all the summer with sweet dew,  
 And with his wings fanning it as it grew.

300

## XXXIII

The plant grew strong and green, the snowy flower  
 Fell, and the long and gourd-like fruit began  
 To turn the light and dew by inward power  
 To its own substance; woven tracery ran  
 Of light firm texture, ribbed and branching, o'er  
 The solid rind, like a leaf's veined fan—  
 Of which Love scooped this boat—and with soft motion  
 Piloted it round the circumfluous ocean.

305

310

## XXXIV

This boat she moored upon her fount, and lit  
 A living spirit within all its frame,  
 Breathing the soul of swiftness into it. 315  
 Couched on the fountain like a panther tame,  
 One of the twain at Evan's feet that sit—  
 Or as on Vesta's sceptre a swift flame—  
 Or on blind Homer's heart a wingèd thought,—  
 In joyous expectation lay the boat. 320

## XXXV

Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow  
 Together, tempering the repugnant mass  
 With liquid love—all things together grow  
 Through which the harmony of love can pass;  
 And a fair Shape out of her hands did flow— 325  
 A living Image, which did far surpass  
 In beauty that bright shape of vital stone  
 Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

## XXXVI

A sexless thing it was, and in its growth  
 It seemed to have developed no defect 330  
 Of either sex, yet all the grace of both,—  
 In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked  
 The bosom swelled lightly with its full youth,  
 The countenance was such as might select  
 Some artist that his skill should never die, 335  
 Imaging forth such perfect purity.

## XXXVII

From its smooth shoulders hung two rapid wings,  
 Fit to have borne it to the seventh sphere,  
 Tipped with the speed of liquid lightnings,  
 Dyed in the ardours of the atmosphere: 340  
 She led her creature to the boiling springs  
 Where the light boat was moored, and said: 'Sit here!'  
 And pointed to the prow, and took her seat  
 Beside the rudder, with opposing feet.

## XXXVIII

And down the streams which clove those mountains vast,  
 Around their inland islets, and amid 346  
 The panther-peopled forests, whose shade cast  
 Darkness and odours, and a pleasure hid

In melancholy gloom, the pinnace passed;  
 By many a star-surrounded pyramid  
 Of icy crag cleaving the purple sky,  
 And caverns yawning round unfathomably.

## XXXIX

The silver noon into that winding dell,  
 With slanted gleam athwart the forest tops,  
 Tempered like golden evening, feebly fell;  
 A green and glowing light, like that which drops  
 From folded lilies in which glow-worms dwell,  
 When Earth over her face Night's mantle wraps;  
 Between the severed mountains lay on high,  
 Over the stream, a narrow rift of sky.

## XL

And ever as she went, the Image lay  
 With folded wings and unawakened eyes;  
 And o'er its gentle countenance did play  
 The busy dreams, as thick as summer flies,  
 Chasing the rapid smiles that would not stay,  
 And drinking the warm tears, and the sweet sighs  
 Inhaling, which, with busy murmur vain,  
 They had aroused from that full heart and brain.

## XLI

And ever down the prone vale, like a cloud  
 Upon a stream of wind, the pinnace went:  
 Now lingering on the pools, in which abode  
 The calm and darkness of the deep content  
 In which they paused; now o'er the shallow road  
 Of white and dancing waters, all besprent  
 With sand and polished pebbles:—mortal boat  
 In such a shallow rapid could not float.

## XLII

And down the earthquaking cataracts which shiver  
 Their snow-like waters into golden air,  
 Or under chasms unfathomable ever  
 Sepulchre them, till in their rage they tear  
 A subterranean portal for the river,  
 It fled—the circling sunbows did upbear  
 Its fall down the hoar precipice of spray,  
 Lighting it far upon its lampless way.

## XLIII

And when the wizard lady would ascend 385  
 The labyrinths of some many-winding vale,  
 Which to the inmost mountain upward tend—  
 She called 'Hermaphroditus!'—and the pale  
 And heavy hue which slumber could extend  
 Over its lips and eyes, as on the gale 390  
 A rapid shadow from a slope of grass,  
 Into the darkness of the stream did pass.

## XLIV

And it unfurled its heaven-coloured pinions,  
 With stars of fire spotting the stream below;  
 And from above into the Sun's dominions 395  
 Flinging a glory, like the golden glow  
 In which Spring clothes her emerald-wingèd minions,  
 All interwoven with fine feathery snow  
 And moonlight splendour of intensest rime,  
 With which frost paints the pines in winter time. 400

## XLV

And then it winnowed the Elysian air  
 Which ever hung about that lady bright,  
 With its aethereal vans—and speeding there,  
 Like a star up the torrent of the night,  
 Or a swift eagle in the morning glare 405  
 Breasting the whirlwind with impetuous flight,  
 The pinnace, oared by those enchanted wings,  
 Clove the fierce streams towards their upper springs.

## XLVI

The water flashed, like sunlight by the prow  
 Of a noon-wandering meteor flung to Heaven; 410  
 The still air seemed as if its waves did flow  
 In tempest down the mountains; loosely driven  
 The lady's radiant hair streamed to and fro:  
 Beneath, the billows having vainly striven  
 Indignant and impetuous, roared to feel 415  
 The swift and steady motion of the keel.

## XLVII

Or, when the weary moon was in the wane,  
 Or in the noon of interlunar night,  
 The lady-witch in visions could not chain  
 Her spirit; but sailed forth under the light 420



Of shooting stars, and bade extend amain  
 Its storm-outspeeding wings, the Hermaphrodite;  
 She to the Austral waters took her way,  
 Beyond the fabulous Thamondocana,—

## XLVIII

Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven, 425  
 Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast shake,  
 With the Antarctic constellations paven,  
 Canopus and his crew, lay the Austral lake—  
 There she would build herself a windless haven  
 Out of the clouds whose moving turrets make 430  
 The bastions of the storm, when through the sky  
 The spirits of the tempest thundered by:

## XLIX

A haven beneath whose translucent floor  
 The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably,  
 And around which the solid vapours hoar, 435  
 Based on the level waters, to the sky  
 Lifted their dreadful crags, and like a shore  
 Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly  
 Hemmed in with rifts and precipices gray,  
 And hanging crags, many a cove and bay. 440

## L

And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash  
 Of the wind's scourge, foamed like a wounded thing,  
 And the incessant hail with stony clash  
 Ploughed up the waters, and the flagging wing  
 Of the housed cormorant in the lightning flash 445  
 Looked like the wreck of some wind-wandering  
 Fragment of inky thunder-smoke—this haven  
 Was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven,—

## LI

On which that lady played her many pranks,  
 Circling the image of a shooting star, 450  
 Even as a tiger on Hydaspes' banks  
 Outspeeds the antelopes which speediest are,  
 In her light boat; and many quips and cranks  
 She played upon the water, till the car  
 Of the late moon, like a sick matron wan, 455  
 To journey from the misty east began.

## LII

And then she called out of the hollow turrets  
 Of those high clouds, white, golden and vermillion,  
 The armies of her ministering spirits—  
 In mighty legions, million after million, 460  
 They came, each troop emblazoning its merits  
 On meteor flags; and many a proud pavilion  
 Of the intertexture of the atmosphere  
 They pitched upon the plain of the calm mere.

## LIII

They framed the imperial tent of their great Queen 465  
 Of woven exhalations, underlaid  
 With lambent lightning-fire, as may be seen  
 A dome of thin and open ivory inlaid  
 With crimson silk—cressets from the serene  
 Hung there, and on the water for her tread 470  
 A tapestry of fleece-like mist was strewn,  
 Dyed in the beams of the ascending moon.

## LIV

And on a throne o'erlaid with starlight, caught  
 Upon those wandering isles of aëry dew,  
 Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not, 475  
 She sate, and heard all that had happened new  
 Between the earth and moon, since they had brought  
 The last intelligence—and now she grew  
 Pale as that moon, lost in the watery night—  
 And now she wept, and now she laughed outright. 480

## LV

These were tame pleasures; she would often climb  
 The steepest ladder of the crudded rack  
 Up to some beakèd cape of cloud sublime,  
 And like Arion on the dolphin's back  
 Ride singing through the shoreless air;—oft-time 485  
 Following the serpent lightning's winding track,  
 She ran upon the platforms of the wind,  
 And laughed to hear the fire-balls roar behind.

## LVI

And sometimes to those streams of upper air  
 Which whirl the earth in its diurnal round, 490  
 She would ascend, and win the spirits there  
 To let her join their chorus. Mortals found

# THE WITCH OF ATLAS

457

That on those days the sky was calm and fair,  
And mystic snatches of harmonious sound  
Wandered upon the earth where'er she passed,  
And happy thoughts of hope, too sweet to last.

495

## LVII

But her choice sport was, in the hours of sleep,  
To glide adown old Nilus, where he threads  
Egypt and Aethiopia, from the steep  
Of utmost Axumè, until he spreads,  
Like a calm flock of silver-fleeced sheep,  
His waters on the plain: and crested heads  
Of cities and proud temples gleam amid,  
And many a vapour-belted pyramid.

500

## LVIII

By Moeris and the Mareotid lakes,  
Strewn with faint blooms like bridal chamber floors,  
Where naked boys bridling tame water-snakes,  
Or charioteering ghastly alligators,  
Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes  
Of those huge forms—within the brazen doors  
Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast,  
Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast.

505

510

## LIX

And where within the surface of the river  
The shadows of the massy temples lie,  
And never are erased—but tremble ever  
Like things which every cloud can doom to die,  
Through lotus-paven canals, and wheresoever  
The works of man pierced that serenest sky  
With tombs, and towers, and fanes, 'twas her delight  
To wander in the shadow of the night.

515

520

## LX

With motion like the spirit of that wind  
Whose soft step deepens slumber, her light feet  
Passed through the peopled haunts of humankind,  
Scattering sweet visions from her presence sweet,  
Through fane, and palace-court, and labyrinth mined  
With many a dark and subterranean street  
Under the Nile, through chambers high and deep  
She passed, observing mortals in their sleep.

525

## LXI

A pleasure sweet doubtless it was to see  
 Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep. 530  
 Here lay two sister twins in infancy;  
 There, a lone youth who in his dreams did weep;  
 Within, two lovers linkèd innocently  
 In their loose locks which over both did creep  
 Like ivy from one stem;—and there lay calm 535  
 Old age with snow-bright hair and folded palm.

## LXII

But other troubled forms of sleep she saw,  
 Not to be mirrored in a holy song—  
 Distortions foul of supernatural awe,  
 And pale imaginings of visioned wrong; 540  
 And all the code of Custom's lawless law  
 Written upon the brows of old and young:  
 'This,' said the wizard maiden, 'is the strife  
 Which stirs the liquid surface of man's life.'

## LXIII

And little did the sight disturb her soul,— 545  
 We, the weak mariners of that wide lake  
 Where'er its shores extend or billows roll,  
 Our course unpiloted and starless make  
 O'er its wild surface to an unknown goal:—  
 But she in the calm depths her way could take, 550  
 Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide  
 Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.

## LXIV

And she saw princes couched under the glow  
 Of sunlike gems; and round each temple-court  
 In dormitories ranged, row after row, 555  
 She saw the priests asleep—all of one sort—  
 For all were educated to be so.—  
 The peasants in their huts, and in the port  
 The sailors she saw cradled on the waves,  
 And the dead lulled within their dreamless graves. 560

## LXV

And all the forms in which those spirits lay  
 Were to her sight like the diaphanous  
 Veils, in which those sweet ladies oft array  
 Their delicate limbs, who would conceal from us

Only their scorn of all concealment: they  
 Move in the light of their own beauty thus.  
 But these and all now lay with sleep upon them,  
 And little thought a Witch was looking on them.

565

## LXVI

She, all those human figures breathing there,  
 Beheld as living spirits—to her eyes  
 The naked beauty of the soul lay bare,  
 And often through a rude and worn disguise  
 She saw the inner form most bright and fair—  
 And then she had a charm of strange device,  
 Which, murmured on mute lips with tender tone,  
 Could make that spirit mingle with her own.

576

575

## LXVII

Alas! Aurora, what wouldst thou have given  
 For such a charm when Tithon became gray?  
 Or how much, Venus, of thy silver heaven  
 Wouldst thou have yielded, ere Proserpina  
 Had half (oh! why not all?) the debt forgiven  
 Which dear Adonis had been doomed to pay,  
 To any witch who would have taught you it?  
 The Heliad doth not know its value yet.

580

## LXVIII

'Tis said in after times her spirit free  
 Knew what love was, and felt itself alone—  
 But holy Dian could not chaster be  
 Before she stooped to kiss Endymion,  
 Than now this lady—like a sexless bee  
 Tasting all blossoms, and confined to none,  
 Among those mortal forms, the wizard-maiden  
 Passed with an eye serene and heart unladen.

585

590

## LXIX

To those she saw most beautiful, she gave  
 Strange panacea in a crystal bowl:—  
 They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet wave,  
 And lived thenceforward as if some control,  
 Mightier than life, were in them; and the grave  
 Of such, when death oppressed the weary soul,  
 Was as a green and overarching bower  
 Lit by the gems of many a starry flower.

595

601

## LXX

For on the night when they were buried, she  
 Restored the embalmers' ruining, and shook  
 The light out of the funeral lamps, to be  
 A mimic day within that deathly nook;  
 And she unwound the woven imagery 605  
 Of second childhood's swaddling bands, and took  
 The coffin, its last cradle, from its niche,  
 And threw it with contempt into a ditch.

## LXXI

And there the body lay, age after age,  
 Mute, breathing, beating, warm, and undecaying, 610  
 Like one asleep in a green hermitage,  
 With gentle smiles about its eyelids playing,  
 And living in its dreams beyond the rage  
 Of death or life; while they were still arraying  
 In liveries ever new, the rapid, blind 615  
 And fleeting generations of mankind.

## LXXII

And she would write strange dreams upon the brain  
 Of those who were less beautiful, and make  
 All harsh and crooked purposes more vain  
 Than in the desert is the serpent's wake 620  
 Which the sand covers—all his evil gain  
 The miser in such dreams would rise and shake  
 Into a beggar's lap;—the lying scribe  
 Would his own lies betray without a bribe.

## LXXIII

The priests would write an explanation full, 625  
 Translating hieroglyphics into Greek,  
 How the God Apis really was a bull,  
 And nothing more; and bid the herald stick  
 The same against the temple doors, and pull  
 The old cant down; they licensed all to speak 630  
 Whate'er they thought of hawks, and cats, and geese,  
 By pastoral letters to each diocese.

## LXXIV

The king would dress an ape up in his crown  
 And robes, and seat him on his glorious seat,  
 And on the right hand of the sunlike throne 635  
 Would place a gaudy mock-bird to repeat

The chatterings of the monkey.—Every one  
 Of the prone courtiers crawled to kiss the feet  
 Of their great Emperor, when the morning came,  
 And kissed—alas, how many kiss the same!

640

## LXXV

The soldiers dreamed that they were blacksmiths, and  
 Walked out of quarters in somnambulism;  
 Round the red anvils you might see them stand  
 Like Cyclopes in Vulcan's sooty abysm,  
 Beating their swords to ploughshares;—in a band  
 The gaolers sent those of the liberal schism  
 Free through the streets of Memphis, much, I wis,  
 To the annoyance of king Amasis.

645

## LXXVI

And timid lovers who had been so coy,  
 They hardly knew whether they loved or not,  
 Would rise out of their rest, and take sweet joy,  
 To the fulfilment of their inmost thought;  
 And when next day the maiden and the boy  
 Met one another, both, like sinners caught,  
 Blushed at the thing which each believed was done  
 Only in fancy—till the tenth moon shone;

650

655

## LXXVII

And then the Witch would let them take no ill:  
 Of many thousand schemes which lovers find,  
 The Witch found one,—and so they took their fill  
 Of happiness in marriage warm and kind.  
 Friends who, by practice of some envious skill,  
 Were torn apart—a wide wound, mind from mind!—  
 She did unite again with visions clear  
 Of deep affection and of truth sincere.

660

## LXXVIII

These were the pranks she played among the cities  
 Of mortal men, and what she did to Sprites  
 And Gods, entangling them in her sweet ditties  
 To do her will, and show their subtle sleights,  
 I will declare another time; for it is  
 A tale more fit for the weird winter nights  
 Than for these garish summer days, when we  
 Scarcely believe much more than we can see.

665

670

## NOTE ON THE WITCH OF ATLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

WE spent the summer of 1820 at the Baths of San Giuliano, four miles from Pisa. These baths were of great use to Shelley in soothing his nervous irritability. We made several excursions in the neighbourhood. The country around is fertile, and diversified and rendered picturesque by ranges of near hills and more distant mountains. The peasantry are a handsome intelligent race; and there was a gladsome sunny heaven spread over us, that rendered home and every scene we visited cheerful and bright. During some of the hottest days of August, Shelley made a solitary journey on foot to the summit of Monte San Pellegrino—a mountain of some height, on the top of which there is a chapel, the object, during certain days of the year, of many pilgrimages. The excursion delighted him while it lasted; though he exerted himself too much, and the effect was considerable lassitude and weakness on his return. During the expedition he conceived the idea, and wrote, in the three days immediately succeeding to his return, the *Witch of Atlas*. This poem is peculiarly characteristic of his tastes—wildly fanciful, full of brilliant imagery, and discarding human interest and passion, to revel in the fantastic ideas that his imagination suggested.

The surpassing excellence of *The Cenci* had made me greatly desire that Shelley should increase his popularity by adopting subjects that would more suit the popular taste than a poem conceived in the abstract and dreamy spirit of the *Witch of Atlas*. It was not only that I wished him to acquire popularity as redounding to his fame; but I believed that he would obtain a greater mastery over his own powers, and greater happiness in his mind, if public applause crowned his endeavours. The few stanzas that precede the poem were addressed to me on my representing these ideas to him. Even now I believe that I was in the right. Shelley did not expect sympathy and approbation from the public; but the want of it took away a portion of the ardour that ought to have sustained him while writing. He was thrown on his own resources, and on the inspiration of his own soul; and wrote because his mind overflowed, without the hope of being appreciated. I had not the most distant wish that he should truckle in opinion, or submit his lofty aspirations for the human race to the low ambition and pride of the many; but I felt sure that, if his poems were more addressed to the common feelings of men, his proper rank among the writers of the day would be acknowledged, and that popularity as a poet would enable his countrymen to do justice to his character and virtues, which in those days it was the mode to attack with the most flagitious calumnies and insulting abuse. That he felt these things deeply cannot be doubted, though he armed himself with the consciousness of acting from a lofty and heroic sense of right. The truth burst from his heart sometimes in solitude, and he would write a few unfinished verses that showed that he felt the sting; among such I find the following:—



'Alas! this is not what I thought Life was.  
 I knew that there were crimes and evil men,  
 Misery and hate; nor did I hope to pass  
 Untouched by suffering through the rugged glen.  
 In mine own heart I saw as in a glass  
 The hearts of others. . . . And, when  
 I went among my kind, with triple brass  
 Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed,  
 To bear scorn, fear, and hate—a woful mass!'

I believed that all this morbid feeling would vanish if the chord of sympathy between him and his countrymen were touched. But my persuasions were vain, the mind could not be bent from its natural inclination. Shelley shrunk instinctively from portraying human passion, with its mixture of good and evil, of disappointment and disquiet. Such opened again the wounds of his own heart; and he loved to shelter himself rather in the airiest flights of fancy, forgetting love and hate, and regret and lost hope, in such imaginations as borrow their hues from sunrise or sunset, from the yellow moonshine or paly twilight, from the aspect of the far ocean or the shadows of the woods,—which celebrated the singing of the winds among the pines, the flow of a murmuring stream, and the thousand harmonious sounds which Nature creates in her solitudes. These are the materials which form the *Witch of Atlas*: it is a brilliant congregation of ideas such as his senses gathered, and his fancy coloured, during his rambles in the sunny land he so much loved.

## EPIPSYCHIDION

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND UNFORTUNATE  
 LADY, EMILIA V——,

NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF ——

L' anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nell' infinito un Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso baratro. HER OWN WORDS

## ADVERTISEMENT

THE Writer of the following lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the *Vita Nuova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it relates; and to a certain other class it must ever remain incompre-

hensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats. Not but that *gran vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto veste di figura, o di colore rettorico; e domandato non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotal veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento.*

The present poem appears to have been intended by the Writer as the dedication to some longer one. The stanza on the opposite page is almost a literal translation from Dante's famous Canzone

*Voi, ch' intendendo, il terzo ciel movete, etc.*

The presumptuous application of the concluding lines to his own composition will raise a smile at the expense of my unfortunate friend: be it a smile not of contempt, but pity. S.

My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few  
 Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,  
 Of such hard matter dost thou entertain;  
 Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring  
 Thee to base company (as chance may do), 5  
 Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,  
 I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,  
 My last delight! tell them that they are dull,  
 And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

### EPIPSYCHIDION

SWEET Spirit! Sister of that orphan one,  
 Whose empire is the name thou weepest on,  
 In my heart's temple I suspend to thee  
 These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow cage, 5  
 Pourest such music, that it might assuage  
 The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,  
 Were they not deaf to all sweet melody;  
 This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale  
 Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale! 10  
 But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,  
 And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-wingèd Heart! who dost for ever  
 Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,  
 Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed 15  
 It over-soared this low and worldly shade,  
 Lie shattered; and thy panting, wounded breast  
 Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!  
 I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be,  
 Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee. 20

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human,  
 Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman  
 All that is insupportable in thee  
 Of light, and love, and immortality!  
 Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse! 25  
 Veilèd Glory of this lampless Universe!  
 Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou living Form  
 Among the Dead! Thou Star above the Storm!  
 Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror!  
 Thou Harmony of Nature's art! Thou Mirror 30  
 In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,  
 All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on!  
 Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee now  
 Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow;  
 I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song 35  
 All of its much mortality and wrong,  
 With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew  
 From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,  
 Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy:  
 Then smile on it, so that it may not die. 40

I never thought before my death to see  
 Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,  
 I love thee; though the world by no thin name  
 Will hide that love from its unvalued shame.  
 Would we two had been twins of the same mother! 45  
 Or, that the name my heart lent to another  
 Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,  
 Blending two beams of one eternity!  
 Yet were one lawful and the other true,  
 These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due, 50  
 How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!  
 I am not thine: I am a part of *thee*.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burned its wings  
 Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,  
 Young Love should teach Time, in his own gray style, 55  
 All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,  
 A lovely soul formed to be blessed and bless?  
 A well of sealed and secret happiness,  
 Whose waters like blithe light and music are,  
 Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A Star 60  
 Which moves not in the moving heavens, alone?  
 A Smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone  
 Amid rude voices? a belovèd light?  
 A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?  
 A Lute, which those whom Love has taught to play 65  
 Make music on, to soothe the roughest day

And lull fond Grief asleep? a buried treasure?  
 A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure?  
 A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I measure  
 The world of fancies, seeking one like thee, 70  
 And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,  
 And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day,  
 Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,  
 Led into light, life, peace. An antelope, 75  
 In the suspended impulse of its lightness,  
 Were less aethereally light: the brightness  
 Of her divinest presence trembles through  
 Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew  
 Embodied in the windless heaven of June 80  
 Amid the splendour-wingèd stars, the Moon  
 Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:  
 And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full  
 Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,  
 Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops 85  
 Of planetary music heard in trance.  
 In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,  
 The sunbeams of those wells which ever leap  
 Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep  
 For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense. 90  
 The glory of her being, issuing thence,  
 Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade  
 Of unentangled intermixture, made  
 By Love, of light and motion: one intense  
 Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence, 95  
 Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing,  
 Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing  
 With the unintermitted blood, which there  
 Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air  
 The crimson pulse of living morning quiver,) 100  
 Continuously prolonged, and ending never,  
 Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled  
 Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world;  
 Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.  
 Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress 105  
 And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress  
 The air of her own speed has disentwined,  
 The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind;  
 And in the soul a wild odour is felt,  
 Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt 110  
 Into the bosom of a frozen bud.—  
 See where she stands! a mortal shape indued

With love and life and light and deity,  
 And motion which may change but cannot die;  
 An image of some bright Eternity; 115  
 A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendour  
 Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender  
 Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love  
 Under whose motions life's dull billows move;  
 A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning; 120  
 A Vision like incarnate April, warning,  
 With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy  
 Into his summer grave.

Ah, woe is me!

What have I dared? where am I lifted? how  
 Shall I descend, and perish not? I know 125  
 That Love makes all things equal: I have heard  
 By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:  
 The spirit of the worm beneath the sod  
 In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate 130  
 Whose course has been so starless! O too late  
 Belovèd! O too soon adored, by me!  
 For in the fields of Immortality  
 My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,  
 A divine presence in a place divine; 135  
 Or should have moved beside it on this earth,  
 A shadow of that substance, from its birth;  
 But not as now:—I love thee; yes, I feel  
 That on the fountain of my heart a seal  
 Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright 140  
 For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast delight.  
 We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,  
 For one another, though dissimilar;  
 Such difference without discord, as can make  
 Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake 145  
 As trembling leaves in a continuous air?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare  
 Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wrecked.  
 I never was attached to that great sect,  
 Whose doctrine is, that each one should select 150  
 Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,  
 And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend  
 To cold oblivion, though it is in the code  
 Of modern morals, and the beaten road  
 Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread, 155  
 Who travel to their home among the dead

By the broad highway of the world, and so  
 With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,  
 The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay, 160  
 That to divide is not to take away.  
 Love is like understanding, that grows bright,  
 Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,  
 Imagination! which from earth and sky, 165  
 And from the depths of human fantasy,  
 As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills  
 The Universe with glorious beams, and kills  
 Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow  
 Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow  
 The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates, 170  
 The life that wears, the spirit that creates  
 One object, and one form, and builds thereby  
 A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this:  
 Evil from good; misery from happiness; 175  
 The baser from the nobler; the impure  
 And frail, from what is clear and must endure.  
 If you divide suffering and dross, you may  
 Diminish till it is consumed away;  
 If you divide pleasure and love and thought, 180  
 Each part exceeds the whole; and we know not  
 How much, while any yet remains unshared,  
 Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared:  
 This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw  
 The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law 185  
 By which those live, to whom this world of life  
 Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife  
 Tills for the promise of a later birth  
 The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft 190  
 Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,  
 In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,  
 Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,  
 Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves  
 Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves 195  
 Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor  
 Paved her light steps;—on an imagined shore,  
 Under the gray beak of some promontory  
 She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,  
 That I beheld her not. In solitudes 200  
 Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,

And from the fountains, and the odours deep  
 Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep  
 Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,  
 Breathed but of *her* to the enamoured air; 205  
 And from the breezes whether low or loud,  
 And from the rain of every passing cloud,  
 And from the singing of the summer-birds,  
 And from all sounds, all silence. In the words  
 Of antique verse and high romance,—in form, 210  
 Sound, colour—in whatever checks that Storm  
 Which with the shattered present chokes the past;  
 And in that best philosophy, whose taste  
 Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom  
 As glorious as a fiery martyrdom; 215  
 Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth  
 I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,  
 And towards the lodestar of my one desire,  
 I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight 220  
 Is as a dead leaf's in the owl light,  
 When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere  
 A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,  
 As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—  
 But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame, 225  
 Passed, like a God throned on a wingèd planet,  
 Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,  
 Into the dreary cone of our life's shade;  
 And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,  
 I would have followed, though the grave between 230  
 Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen:  
 When a voice said:—'O thou of hearts the weakest,  
 The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest.'  
 Then I—'Where?'—the world's echo answered 'where?'  
 And in that silence, and in my despair, 235  
 I questioned every tongueless wind that flew  
 Over my tower of mourning, if it knew  
 Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul;  
 And murmured names and spells which have control  
 Over the sightless tyrants of our fate; 240  
 But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate  
 The night which closed on her; nor uncreate  
 That world within this Chaos, mine and me,  
 Of which she was the veiled Divinity,  
 The world I say of thoughts that worshipped her: 245  
 And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear

And every gentle passion sick to death,  
 Feeding my course with expectation's breath,  
 Into the wintry forest of our life;  
 And struggling through its error with vain strife, 250  
 And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,  
 And half bewildered by new forms, I passed,  
 Seeking among those untaught foresters  
 If I could find one form resembling hers,  
 In which she might have masked herself from me. 255  
 There,—One, whose voice was venom'd melody  
 Sate by a well, under blue nightshade bowers;  
 The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,  
 Her touch was as electric poison,—flame  
 Out of her looks into my vitals came, 260  
 And from her living cheeks and bosom flew  
 A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew  
 Into the core of my green heart, and lay  
 Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown gray  
 O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime 265  
 With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought  
 The shadow of that idol of my thought.  
 And some were fair—but beauty dies away:  
 Others were wise—but honeyed words betray: 270  
 And One was true—oh! why not true to me?  
 Then, as hunted deer that could not flee,  
 I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,  
 Wounded and weak and panting; the cold day  
 Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain. 275  
 When, like a noonday dawn, there shone again  
 Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed  
 As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed  
 As is the Moon, whose changes ever run  
 Into themselves, to the eternal Sun; 280  
 The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,  
 Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles,  
 That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame  
 Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,  
 And warms not but illumines. Young and fair 285  
 As the descended Spirit of that sphere,  
 She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night  
 From its own darkness, until all was bright  
 Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind,  
 And, as a cloud charioted by the wind, 290  
 She led me to a cave in that wild place,  
 And sate beside me, with her downward face



Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon  
 Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.  
 And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb, 295  
 And all my being became bright or dim  
 As the Moon's image in a summer sea,  
 According as she smiled or frowned on me;  
 And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed:  
 Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead:— 300  
 For at her silver voice came Death and Life,  
 Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,  
 Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,  
 The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,  
 And through the cavern without wings they flew, 305  
 And cried 'Away, he is not of our crew.'  
 I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,  
 Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips  
 Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse;— 310  
 And how my soul was as a lampless sea,  
 And who was then its Tempest; and when She,  
 The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost  
 Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast  
 The moving billows of my being fell 315  
 Into a death of ice, immovable;—  
 And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,  
 The white Moon smiling all the while on it,  
 These words conceal:—If not, each word would be  
 The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me! 320

At length, into the obscure Forest came  
 The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.  
 Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns  
 Flashed from her motion splendour like the Morn's,  
 And from her presence life was radiated 325  
 Through the gray earth and branches bare and dead;  
 So that her way was paved, and roofed above  
 With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love;  
 And music from her respiration spread  
 Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated 330  
 By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,  
 So that the savage winds hung mute around;  
 And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair  
 Dissolving the dull cold in the frore air:  
 Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun, 335  
 When light is changed to love, this glorious One  
 Floated into the cavern where I lay,  
 And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay

Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below  
 As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow 340  
 I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night  
 Was penetrating me with living light:  
 I knew it was the Vision veiled from me  
 So many years—that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth, 345  
 This world of love, this *me*; and into birth  
 Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart  
 Magnetic might into its central heart;  
 And lift its billows and its mists, and guide  
 By everlasting laws, each wind and tide 350  
 To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave;  
 And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave  
 Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers  
 The armies of the rainbow-wingèd showers;  
 And, as those married lights, which from the towers 355  
 Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe  
 In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe;  
 And all their many-mingled influence blend,  
 If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end;—  
 So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway 360  
 Govern my sphere of being, night and day!  
 Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might;  
 Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light;  
 And, through the shadow of the seasons three,  
 From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity, 365  
 Light it into the Winter of the tomb,  
 Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.  
 Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,  
 Who drew the heart of this frail Universe  
 Towards thine own; till, wrecked in that convulsion, 370  
 Alternating attraction and repulsion,  
 Thine went astray and that was rent in twain;  
 Oh, float into our azure heaven again!  
 Be there Love's folding-star at thy return;  
 The living Sun will feed thee from its urn 375  
 Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her horn  
 In thy last smiles; adoring Even and Morn  
 Will worship thee with incense of calm breath  
 And lights and shadows; as the star of Death  
 And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild 380  
 Called Hope and Fear—upon the heart are piled  
 Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine  
 A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine,

Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth  
 Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth 385  
 Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,  
 Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.  
 To whatsoe'er of dull mortality  
 Is mine, remain a vestal sister still; 390  
 To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,  
 Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united  
 Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.  
 The hour is come:—the destined Star has risen  
 Which shall descend upon a vacant prison. 395  
 The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set  
 The sentinels—but true Love never yet  
 Was thus constrained: it overleaps all fence:  
 Like lightning, with invisible violence  
 Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath, 400  
 Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,  
 Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way  
 Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array  
 Of arms: more strength has Love than he or they;  
 For it can burst his charnel, and make free 405  
 The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,  
 The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,

A ship is floating in the harbour now,  
 A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow;  
 There is a path on the sea's azure floor, 410  
 No keel has ever ploughed that path before;  
 The halcyons brood around the foamless isles;  
 The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles;  
 The merry mariners are bold and free:  
 Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me? 415  
 Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest  
 Is a far Eden of the purple East;  
 And we between her wings will sit, while Night,  
 And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,  
 Our ministers, along the boundless Sea, 420  
 Treading each other's heels, unheededly.  
 It is an isle under Ionian skies,  
 Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,  
 And, for the harbours are not safe and good,  
 This land would have remained a solitude 425  
 But for some pastoral people native there,  
 Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air

Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,  
 Simple and spirited; innocent and bold. 430  
 The blue Aegean girds this chosen home,  
 With ever-changing sound and light and foam,  
 Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar;  
 And all the winds wandering along the shore  
 Undulate with the undulating tide:  
 There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide; 435  
 And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,  
 As clear as elemental diamond,  
 Or serene morning air; and far beyond,  
 The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer  
 (Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year) 440  
 Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls  
 Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls  
 Illumining, with sound that never fails  
 Accompany the noonday nightingales;  
 And all the place is peopled with sweet airs; 445  
 The light clear element which the isle wears  
 Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,  
 Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,  
 And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;  
 And from the moss violets and jonquils peep, 450  
 And dart their arrowy odour through the brain  
 Till you might faint with that delicious pain.  
 And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,  
 With that deep music is in unison:  
 Which is a soul within the soul—they seem 455  
 Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—  
 It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,  
 Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;  
 Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,  
 Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air. 460  
 It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,  
 Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light  
 Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they  
 Sail onward far upon their fatal way:  
 The wingèd storms, chanting their thunder-psalm 465  
 To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm  
 Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,  
 From which its fields and woods ever renew  
 Their green and golden immortality.  
 And from the sea there rise, and from the sky 470  
 There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,  
 Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,  
 Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,  
 Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride

Glowing at once with love and loveliness,  
 Blushes and trembles at its own excess:  
 Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less  
 Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,  
 An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile  
 Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen 480  
 O'er the gray rocks, blue waves, and forests green,  
 Filling their bare and void interstices.—  
 But the chief marvel of the wilderness  
 Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how  
 None of the rustic island-people know: 485  
 'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height  
 It overtops the woods; but, for delight,  
 Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime  
 Had been invented, in the world's young prime,  
 Reared it, a wonder of that simple time, 490  
 An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house  
 Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.  
 It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,  
 But, as it were Titanic; in the heart  
 Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown 495  
 Out of the mountains, from the living stone,  
 Lifting itself in caverns light and high:  
 For all the antique and learned imagery  
 Has been erased, and in the place of it  
 The ivy and the wild-vine interknit 500  
 The volumes of their many-twining stems;  
 Parasite flowers illumine with dewy gems  
 The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky  
 Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery  
 With moonlight patches, or star atoms keen, 505  
 Or fragments of the day's intense serene;—  
 Working mosaic on their Parian floors.  
 And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers  
 And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem  
 To sleep in one another's arms, and dream 510  
 Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we  
 Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed  
 Thee to be lady of the solitude.—  
 And I have fitted up some chambers there 515  
 Looking towards the golden Eastern air,  
 And level with the living winds, which flow  
 Like waves above the living waves below.—  
 I have sent books and music there, and all  
 Those instruments with which high Spirits call 520

The future from its cradle, and the past  
 Out of its grave, and make the present last  
 In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,  
 Folded within their own eternity.  
 Our simple life wants little, and true taste 525  
 Hires not the pale drudge Luxury, to waste  
 The scene it would adorn, and therefore still,  
 Nature with all her children haunts the hill.  
 The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet  
 Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit 530  
 Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance  
 Between the quick bats in their twilight dance;  
 The spotted deer bask in the fresh moonlight  
 Before our gate, and the slow, silent night  
 Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep. 535  
 Be this our home in Life, and when years heap  
 Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,  
 Let us become the overhanging day,  
 The living soul of this Elysian isle,  
 Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile 540  
 We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,  
 Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,  
 And wander in the meadows, or ascend  
 The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend  
 With lightest winds, to touch their paramour; 545  
 Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,  
 Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea  
 Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,—  
 Possessing and possessed by all that is  
 Within that calm circumference of bliss, 550  
 And by each other, till to love and live  
 Be one:—or, at the noontide hour, arrive  
 Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep  
 The moonlight of the expired night asleep,  
 Through which the awakened day can never peep; 555  
 A veil for our seclusion, close as night's,  
 Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights;  
 Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain  
 Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.  
 And we will talk, until thought's melody 560  
 Become too sweet for utterance, and it die  
 In words, to live again in looks, which dart  
 With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,  
 Harmonizing silence without a sound.  
 Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound, 565  
 And our veins beat together; and our lips  
 With other eloquence than words, eclipse

The soul that burns between them, and the wells  
 Which boil under our being's inmost cells,  
 The fountains of our deepest life, shall be 570  
 Confused in Passion's golden purity,  
 As mountain-springs under the morning sun.  
 We shall become the same, we shall be one  
 Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?  
 One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew, 575  
 Till like two meteors of expanding flame,  
 Those spheres instinct with it become the same,  
 Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still  
 Burning, yet ever inconsumable:  
 In one another's substance finding food, 580  
 Like flames too pure and light and unimbued  
 To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,  
 Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away:  
 One hope within two wills, one will beneath  
 Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death, 585  
 One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,  
 And one annihilation. Woe is me!  
 The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce  
 Into the height of Love's rare Universe,  
 Are chains of lead around its flight of fire— 590  
 I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,  
 And say:—'We are the masters of thy slave;  
 What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine?'  
 Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave, 595  
 All singing loud: 'Love's very pain is sweet,  
 But its reward is in the world divine  
 Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave.'  
 So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste  
 Over the hearts of men, until ye meet 600  
 Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,  
 And bid them love each other and be blessed:  
 And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,  
 And come and be my guest,—for I am Love's.

## FRAGMENTS CONNECTED WITH EPIPSYCHIDION

 THREE EARLY DRAFTS OF THE PREFACE  
 (ADVERTISEMENT)

## PREFACE I

THE following Poem was found amongst other papers in the Portfolio  
 of a young Englishman with whom the Editor had contracted an intimacy  
 at Florence, brief indeed, but sufficiently long to render the Catastrophe

by which it terminated one of the most painful events of his life.

The literary merit of the Poem in question may not be considerable; but worse verses are printed every day, &

He was an accomplished & amiable person but his error was, *θνητος ὢν μὴ θνητα φρονεῖν*,—his fate is an additional proof that ‘The tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.’—He had framed to himself certain opinions, founded no doubt upon the truth of things, but built up to a Babel height; they fell by their own weight, & the thoughts that were his architects, became unintelligible one to the other, as men upon whom confusion of tongues has fallen.

[These] verses seem to have been written as a sort of dedication of some work to have been presented to the person whom they address: but his papers afford no trace of such a work—The circumstances to which [they] the poem allude, may easily be understood by those to whom [the] spirit of the poem itself is [un]intelligible: a detail of facts, sufficiently romantic in [themselves but] their combinations

The melancholy [task] charge of consigning the body of my poor friend to the grave, was committed to me by his desolated family. I caused him to be buried in a spot selected by himself.

#### PREFACE II

[Epips] T. E. V. Epipsych

Lines addressed to  
the Noble Lady  
[Emilia] [E. V.]  
Emilia

[The following Poem was found in the PF. of a young Englishman, who died on his passage from Leghorn to the Levant. He had bought one of the Sporades] He was accompanied by a lady [who might have been] supposed to be his wife, & an effeminate looking youth, to whom he shewed an [attachment] so [singular] excessive an attachment as to give rise to the suspicion, that she was a woman—at his death this suspicion was confirmed; object speedily found a refuge both from the taunts of the brute multitude, and from the of her grief in the same grave that contained her lover.—He had bought one of the Sporades, & fitted up a Saracenic castle which accident had preserved in some repair with simple elegance, & it was his intention to dedicate the remainder of his life to undisturbed intercourse with his companions

These verses apparently were intended as a dedication of a longer poem or series of poems

#### PREFACE III

The writer of these lines died at Florence in [January 1820] while he was preparing \* \* for one wildest of the of the Sporades, where he bought & fitted up the ruins of some old building—His life was singular, less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which they received from his own character & feelings—



The verses were apparently intended by the writer to accompany some longer poem or collection of poems, of which there\* [are no remnants in his] \* \* \* remains [in his] portfolio.—

The editor is induced to

The present poem, like the *vita Nova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter of fact history of the circumstances to which it relate, & to a certain other class, it must & ought ever to remain incomprehensible—It was evidently intended to be prefixed to a longer poem or series of poems—but among his papers there are no traces of such a collection.

#### PASSAGES OF THE POEM, OR CONNECTED THEREWITH

HERE, my dear friend, is a new book for you;  
 I have already dedicated two  
 To other friends, one female and one male,—  
 What you are, is a thing that I must veil;  
 What can this be to those who praise or rail? 5  
 I never was attached to that great sect  
 Whose doctrine is that each one should select  
 Out of the world a mistress or a friend,  
 And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend  
 To cold oblivion—though 'tis in the code 10  
 Of modern morals, and the beaten road  
 Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread  
 Who travel to their home among the dead  
 By the broad highway of the world—and so  
 With one sad friend, and many a jealous foe, 15  
 The dreariest and the longest journey go.

Free love has this, different from gold and clay,  
 That to divide is not to take away.  
 Like ocean, which the general north wind breaks  
 Into ten thousand waves, and each one makes 20  
 A mirror of the moon—like some great glass,  
 Which did distort whatever form might pass,  
 Dashed into fragments by a playful child,  
 Which then reflects its eyes and forehead mild;  
 Giving for one, which it could ne'er express, 25  
 A thousand images of loveliness.

If I were one whom the loud world held wise,  
 I should disdain to quote authorities  
 In commendation of this kind of love:—  
 Why there is first the God in heaven above, 30  
 Who wrote a book called Nature, 'tis to be  
 Reviewed, I hear, in the next Quarterly;

And Socrates, the Jesus Christ of Greece,  
 And Jesus Christ Himself, did never cease  
 To urge all living things to love each other, 32  
 And to forgive their mutual faults, and smother  
 The Devil of disunion in their souls.

. . . . .

I love you!—Listen, O embodied Ray  
 Of the great Brightness; I must pass away  
 While you remain, and these light words must be 40  
 Tokens by which you may remember me.  
 Start not—the thing you are is unbetrayed,  
 If you are human, and if but the shade  
 Of some sublimer spirit . . . .

. . . . .

And as to friend or mistress, 'tis a form; 45  
 Perhaps I wish you were one. Some declare  
 You a familiar spirit, as you are;  
 Others with a more inhuman  
 Hint that, though not my wife, you are a woman;  
 What is the colour of your eyes and hair? 50  
 Why, if you were a lady, it were fair  
 The world should know—but, as I am afraid,  
 The Quarterly would bait you if betrayed;  
 And if, as it will be sport to see them stumble  
 Over all sorts of scandals, hear them mumble 55  
 Their litany of curses—some guess right,  
 And others swear you're a Hermaphrodite;  
 Like that sweet marble monster of both sexes,  
 Which looks so sweet and gentle that it vexes  
 The very soul that the soul is gone 60  
 Which lifted from her limbs the veil of stone.

. . . . .

It is a sweet thing, friendship, a dear balm,  
 A happy and auspicious bird of calm,  
 Which rides o'er life's ever tumultuous Ocean;  
 A God that broods o'er chaos in commotion; 65  
 A flower which fresh as Lapland roses are,  
 Lifts its bold head into the world's frore air,  
 And blooms most radiantly when others die,  
 Health, hope, and youth, and brief prosperity;  
 And with the light and odour of its bloom, 70  
 Shining within the dungeon and the tomb;

Whose coming is as light and music are  
 'Mid dissonance and gloom—a star  
 Which moves not 'mid the moving heavens alone—  
 A smile among dark frowns—a gentle tone 75  
 Among rude voices, a beloved light,  
 A solitude, a refuge, a delight.  
 If I had but a friend! Why, I have three  
 Even by my own confession; there may be  
 Some more, for what I know, for 'tis my mind 80  
 To call my friends all who are wise and kind,—  
 And these, Heaven knows, at best are very few;  
 But none can ever be more dear than you.  
 Why should they be? My muse has lost her wings,  
 Or like a dying swan who soars and sings, 85  
 I should describe you in heroic style,  
 But as it is, are you not void of guile?  
 A lovely soul, formed to be blessed and bless:  
 A well of sealed and secret happiness;  
 A lute which those whom Love has taught to play 90  
 Make music on to cheer the roughest day,  
 And enchant sadness till it sleeps? . . . .

. . . . .  
 To the oblivion whither I and thou,  
 All loving and all lovely, hasten now  
 With steps, ah, too unequal! may we meet 95  
 In one Elysium or one winding-sheet!

If any should be curious to discover  
 Whether to you I am a friend or lover,  
 Let them read Shakespeare's sonnets, taking thence  
 A whetstone for their dull intelligence 100  
 That tears and will not cut, or let them guess  
 How Diotima, the wise prophetess,  
 Instructed the instructor, and why he  
 Rebuked the infant spirit of melody  
 On Agathon's sweet lips, which as he spoke 105  
 Was as the lovely star when morn has broke  
 The roof of darkness, in the golden dawn,  
 Half-hidden, and yet beautiful.

I'll pawn  
 My hopes of Heaven—you know what they are worth—  
 That the presumptuous pedagogues of Earth, 110  
 If they could tell the riddle offered here  
 Would scorn to be, or being to appear  
 What now they seem and are—but let them chide,  
 They have few pleasures in the world beside;

Perhaps we should be dull were we not chidden, 115  
 Paradise fruits are sweetest when forbidden.  
 Folly can season Wisdom, Hatred Love.

Farewell, if it can be to say farewell  
 To those who

I will not, as most dedicators do, 120  
 Assure myself and all the world and you,  
 That you are faultless—would to God they were  
 Who taunt me with your love! I then should wear  
 These heavy chains of life with a light spirit,  
 And would to God I were, or even as near it 125  
 As you, dear heart. Alas! what are we? Clouds  
 Driven by the wind in warring multitudes,  
 Which rain into the bosom of the earth,  
 And rise again, and in our death and birth,  
 And through our restless life, take as from heaven 130  
 Hues which are not our own, but which are given,  
 And then withdrawn, and with inconstant glance  
 Flash from the spirit to the countenance.  
 There is a Power, a Love, a Joy, a God  
 Which makes in mortal hearts its brief abode, 135  
 A Pythian exhalation, which inspires  
 Love, only love—a wind which o'er the wires  
 Of the soul's giant harp  
 There is a mood which language faints beneath;  
 You feel it striding, as Almighty Death 140  
 His bloodless steed . . . .

And what is that most brief and bright delight  
 Which rushes through the touch and through the sight,  
 And stands before the spirit's inmost throne,  
 A naked Seraph? None hath ever known. 145  
 Its birth is darkness, and its growth desire;  
 Untameable and fleet and fierce as fire,  
 Not to be touched but to be felt alone,  
 It fills the world with glory—and is gone.

It floats with rainbow pinions o'er the stream 150  
 Of life, which flows, like a dream  
 Into the light of morning, to the grave  
 As to an ocean . . . .

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FRAGMENTS CONNECTED WITH EPIPSYCHIDION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 483                                                               |
| What is that joy which serene infancy<br>Perceives not, as the hours content them by,<br>Each in a chain of blossoms, yet enjoys<br>The shapes of this new world, in giant toys<br>Wrought by the busy            ever new?<br>Remembrance borrows Fancy's glass, to show<br>These forms more            sincere<br>Than now they are, than then, perhaps, they were.<br>When everything familiar seemed to be<br>Wonderful, and the immortality<br>Of this great world, which all things must inherit,<br>Was felt as one with the awakening spirit,<br>Unconscious of itself, and of the strange<br>Distinctions which in its proceeding change<br>It feels and knows, and mourns as if each were<br>A desolation . . . . | 155<br><br><br><br><br><br><br>160<br><br><br><br><br><br><br>165 |
| . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                   |
| Were it not a sweet refuge, Emily,<br>For all those exiles from the dull insane<br>Who vex this pleasant world with pride and pain,<br>For all that band of sister-spirits known<br>To one another by a voiceless tone?<br>. . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 170<br><br><br><br><br><br><br>175                                |
| If day should part us night will mend division<br>And if sleep parts us—we will meet in vision<br>And if life parts us—we will mix in death<br>Yielding our mite [?] of unreluctant breath<br>Death cannot part us—we must meet again<br>In all in nothing in delight in pain:<br>How, why or when or where—it matters not<br>So that we share an undivided lot. . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 180<br><br><br><br><br><br><br>185                                |
| . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                   |
| And we will move possessing and possessed<br>Wherever beauty on the earth's bare [?] breast<br>Lies like the shadow of thy soul—till we<br>Become one being with the world we see. . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 185                                                               |

## ADONAIS

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS, AUTHOR OF  
ENDYMION, HYPERION, ETC.

Ἀσιτὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν Ἐῶρος·  
νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις Ἑσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.—PLATO.

## PREFACE

Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, ποτὶ σὸν σιόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες.  
πῶς τευ τοῖς χεῖλεσσι ποιέδραμε, κοῦκ ἐγλυκάνθη;  
τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσοοῦτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κερᾶσαι τοι,  
ἢ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον; ἔκφυγεν ὠδάν.

—MOSCHUS, EPITAPH. BION.

It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled prove at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of *Hyperion* as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the — of — 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgements from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to

*Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated, with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, *Paris*, and *Woman*, and a *Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion* was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, 'almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend.' Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from 'such stuff as dreams are made of.' His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

I

I WEEP for Adonais—he is dead!  
 O, weep for Adonais! though our tears  
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!  
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years  
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,  
 And teach them thine own sorrow, say: 'With me  
 Died Adonais; till the Future dares  
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be  
 An echo and a light unto eternity!'

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,  
 When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies  
 In darkness? where was lorn Urania  
 When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,

'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise  
 She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath, 15  
 Rekindled all the fading melodies,  
 With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,  
 He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

## III

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!  
 Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep! 20  
 Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed  
 Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep  
 Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;  
 For he is gone, where all things wise and fair  
 Descend;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep 25  
 Will yet restore him to the vital air;  
 Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

## IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again!  
 Lament anew, Urania!—He died, 30  
 Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,  
 Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,  
 The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,  
 Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite  
 Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,  
 Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite 35  
 Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

## V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!  
 Not all to that bright station dared to climb;  
 And happier they their happiness who knew,  
 Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time 40  
 In which suns perished; others more sublime,  
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,  
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;  
 And some yet live, treading the thorny road,  
 Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode. 45

## VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished—  
 The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,  
 Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,  
 And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;  
 Most musical of mourners, weep anew! 50



Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,  
The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew  
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;  
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

VII

To that high Capital, where kingly Death 55  
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,  
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,  
A grave among the eternal.—Come away!  
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day  
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still 60  
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;  
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill  
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—  
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace 65  
The shadow of white Death, and at the door  
Invisible Corruption waits to trace  
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;  
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe  
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface 70  
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law  
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,  
The passion-wingèd Ministers of thought,  
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams 75  
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught  
The love which was its music, wander not,—  
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,  
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot  
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain, 80  
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,  
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries;  
'Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;  
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes, 85  
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies  
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.'  
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!

She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain  
 She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain. 90

## XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew  
 Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;  
 Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw  
 The wreath upon him, like an anadem,  
 Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem; 95  
 Another in her wilful grief would break  
 Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem  
 A greater loss with one which was more weak;  
 And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

## XII

Another Splendour on his mouth alit, 100  
 That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath  
 Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,  
 And pass into the panting heart beneath  
 With lightning and with music: the damp death  
 Quenched its caress upon his icy lips; 105  
 And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath  
 Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,  
 It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

## XIII

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,  
 Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies, 110  
 Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations  
 Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;  
 And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,  
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam  
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes, 115  
 Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp might seem  
 Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

## XIV

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,  
 From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,  
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought 120  
 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,  
 Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,  
 Dimmed the aëreal eyes that kindle day;  
 Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,  
 Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay, 125  
 And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

## XV

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,  
 And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,  
 And will no more reply to winds or fountains,  
 Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray, 130  
 Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;  
 Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear  
 Than those for whose disdain she pined away  
 Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear  
 Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear. 135

## XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down  
 Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,  
 Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,  
 For whom should she have waked the sullen year?  
 To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear 140  
 Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both  
 Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere  
 Amid the faint companions of their youth,  
 With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

## XVII

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale 145  
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;  
 Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale  
 Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain  
 Her mighty youth with mourning, doth complain,  
 Soaring and screaming round her empty nest, 150  
 As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain  
 Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,  
 And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

## XVIII

Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,  
 But grief returns with the revolving year; 155  
 The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;  
 The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;  
 Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;  
 The amorous birds now pair in every brake,  
 And build their mossy homes in field and brere; 160  
 And the green lizard, and the golden snake,  
 Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

## XIX

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean  
 A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst  
 As it has ever done, with change and motion, 165  
 From the great morning of the world when first  
 God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed,  
 The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;  
 All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;  
 Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight, 170  
 The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

## XX

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,  
 Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;  
 Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour  
 Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death 175  
 And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;  
 Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows  
 Be as a sword consumed before the sheath  
 By sightless lightning?—the intense atom glows  
 A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose. 180

## XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,  
 But for our grief, as if it had not been,  
 And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!  
 Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene  
 The actors or spectators? Great and mean 185  
 Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.  
 As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,  
 Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,  
 Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

## XXII

*He* will awake no more, oh, never more! 190  
 'Wake thou,' cried Misery, 'childless Mother, rise  
 Out of thy sleep, and slake in thy heart's core,  
 A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs.'  
 And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,  
 And all the Echoes whom their sister's song 195  
 Had held in holy silence, cried: 'Arise!'  
 Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,  
 From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs  
 Out of the East, and follows wild and drear 200  
 The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,  
 Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,  
 Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear  
 So struck, so roused, so rapped Urania:  
 So saddened round her like an atmosphere 205  
 Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way  
 Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,  
 Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,  
 And human hearts, which to her aery tread 210  
 Yielding not, wounded the invisible  
 Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:  
 And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,  
 Rent the soft Form they never could repel,  
 Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May, 215  
 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,  
 Shamed by the presence of that living Might,  
 Blushed to annihilation, and the breath  
 Revisited those lips, and Life's pale light 220  
 Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.  
 'Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,  
 As silent lightning leaves the starless night!  
 Leave me not!' cried Urania: her distress  
 Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

XXVI

'Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;  
 Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;  
 And in my heartless breast and burning brain  
 That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive, 226  
 With food of saddest memory kept alive, 230  
 Now thou art dead, as if it were a part  
 Of thee, my Adonais! I would give  
 All that I am to be as thou now art!  
 But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

## XXVII

'O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert, 235  
 Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men  
 Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart  
 Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?  
 Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then  
 Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear? 240  
 Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when  
 Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,  
 The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

## XXVIII

'The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;  
 The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead; 245  
 The vultures to the conqueror's banner true  
 Who feed where Desolation first has fed,  
 And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,  
 When, like Apollo, from his golden bow  
 The Pythian of the age one arrow sped 250  
 And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,  
 They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

## XXIX

'The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;  
 He sets, and each ephemeral insect then  
 Is gathered into death without a dawn, 255  
 And the immortal stars awake again;  
 So is it in the world of living men:  
 A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight  
 Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when  
 It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light 260  
 Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.'

## XXX

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,  
 Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;  
 The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame  
 Over his living head like Heaven is bent, 265  
 An early but enduring monument,  
 Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song  
 In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent  
 The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,  
 And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his tongue. 270

## XXXI

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,  
 A phantom among men; companionless  
 As the last cloud of an expiring storm  
 Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,  
 Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness, 275  
 Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray  
 With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,  
 And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,  
 Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

## XXXII

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift— 280  
 A Love in desolation masked;—a Power  
 Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift  
 The weight of the superincumbent hour;  
 It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,  
 A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak 285  
 Is it not broken? On the withering flower  
 The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek  
 The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

## XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies overblown,  
 And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue; 290  
 And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,  
 Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew  
 Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,  
 Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart  
 Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew 295  
 He came the last, neglected and apart;  
 A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

## XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan  
 Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band  
 Who in another's fate now wept his own, 300  
 As in the accents of an unknown land  
 He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned  
 The Stranger's mien, and murmured: 'Who art thou?'  
 He answered not, but with a sudden hand  
 Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow, 305  
 Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that it should be so!

## XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?  
 Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?  
 What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,  
 In mockery of monumental stone, 310  
 The heavy heart heaving without a moan?  
 If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,  
 Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,  
 Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,  
 The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice. 315

## XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!  
 What deaf and viperous murderer could crown  
 Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?  
 The nameless worm would now itself disown:  
 It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone 320  
 Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,  
 But what was howling in one breast alone,  
 Silent with expectation of the song,  
 Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

## XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame! 325  
 Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,  
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!  
 But be thyself, and know thyself to be!  
 And ever at thy season be thou free  
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow; 330  
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;  
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,  
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

## XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled  
 Far from these carrion kites that scream below; 335  
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;  
 Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now—  
 Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow  
 Back to the burning fountain whence it came,  
 A portion of the Eternal, which must glow 340  
 Through time and change, unquenchably the same,  
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.



## XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—  
 He hath awakened from the dream of life—  
 'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep 345  
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,  
 And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife  
 Invulnerable nothings.—*We* decay  
 Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief  
 Convulse us and consume us day by day, 350  
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

## XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;  
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
 And that unrest which men miscall delight, 355  
 Can touch him not and torture not again;  
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
 He is secure, and now can never mourn  
 A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;  
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,  
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn. 360

## XLI

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;  
 Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,  
 Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee  
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;  
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan! 365  
 Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,  
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown  
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare  
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

## XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard 370  
 His voice in all her music, from the moan  
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;  
 He is a presence to be felt and known  
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,  
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move 375  
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own;  
 Which wields the world with never-weary'd love  
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

## XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness  
 Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear 380  
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress  
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,  
 All new successions to the forms they wear;  
 Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight  
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear; 385  
 And bursting in its beauty and its might  
 From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

## XLIV

The splendours of the firmament of time  
 May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;  
 Like stars to their appointed height they climb, 390  
 And death is a low mist which cannot blot  
 The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought  
 Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,  
 And love and life contend in it, for what  
 Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there 395  
 And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

## XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown  
 Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,  
 Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton  
 Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not 400  
 Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought  
 And as he fell and as he lived and loved  
 Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,  
 Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:  
 Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reprovèd. 405

## XLVI

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,  
 But whose transmitted effluence cannot die  
 So long as fire outlives the parent spark,  
 Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.  
 'Thou art become as one of us,' they cry, 410  
 'It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long  
 Swung blind in unascended majesty,  
 Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.  
 Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!'

## XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth, 415  
 Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.  
 Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;  
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light  
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might  
 Sate the void circumference: then shrink 420  
 Even to a point within our day and night;  
 And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink  
 When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

## XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,  
 Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought 425  
 That ages, empires, and religions there  
 Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;  
 For such as he can lend,—they borrow not  
 Glory from those who made the world their prey;  
 And he is gathered to the kings of thought 430  
 Who waged contention with their time's decay,  
 And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

## XLIX

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,  
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness;  
 And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise, 435  
 And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress  
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness  
 Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead  
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access  
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead 440  
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

## L

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time  
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;  
 And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,  
 Pavilioning the dust of him who planned 445  
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand  
 Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,  
 A field is spread, on which a newer band  
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,  
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath. 450

## LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet  
 To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned  
 Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,  
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,  
 Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find 455  
 Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,  
 Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind  
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.  
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

## LII

The One remains, the many change and pass; 460  
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;  
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,  
 Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,  
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek! 465  
 Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,  
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak  
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

## LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?  
 Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here 470  
 They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!  
 A light is passed from the revolving year,  
 And man, and woman; and what still is dear  
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.  
 The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near: 475  
 'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,  
 No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

## LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
 That Beauty in which all things work and move,  
 That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse 480  
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love  
 Which through the web of being blindly wove  
 By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
 The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me, 485  
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,  
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given; 490  
 The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!  
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;  
 Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,  
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are. 495

CANCELLED PASSAGES OF THE POEM

And ever as he went he swept a lyre  
 Of unaccustomed shape, and strings  
 Now like the of impetuous fire,  
 Which shakes the forest with its murmurings,  
 Now like the rush of the aëreal wings 5  
 Of the enamoured wind among the treen,  
 Whispering unimaginable things,  
 And dying on the streams of dew serene,  
 Which feed the unmown meads with ever-during green.

. . . . .

And the green Paradise which western waves 10  
 Embosom in their ever-wailing sweep,  
 Talking of freedom to their tongueless caves,  
 Or to the spirits which within them keep  
 A record of the wrongs which, though they sleep,  
 Die not, but dream of retribution, heard 15  
 His hymns, and echoing them from steep to steep,  
 Kept——

. . . . .

And then came one of sweet and earnest looks,  
 Whose soft smiles to his dark and night-like eyes  
 Were as the clear and ever-living brooks 20  
 Are to the obscure fountains whence they rise,  
 Showing how pure they are: a Paradise  
 Of happy truth upon his forehead low  
 Lay, making wisdom lovely, in the guise  
 Of earth-awakening morn upon the brow 25  
 Of star-deserted heaven, while ocean gleams below.

His song, though very sweet, was low and faint,  
A simple strain——

A mighty Phantasm, half concealed  
In darkness of his own exceeding light, 30  
Which clothed his awful presence unrevealed,  
Charioted on the night  
Of thunder-smoke, whose skirts were chrysolite.

And like a sudden meteor, which outstrips  
The splendour-wingèd chariot of the sun, 35  
eclipse  
The armies of the golden stars, each one  
Pavilioned in its tent of light—all strewn  
Over the chasms of blue night——

## HELLAS

### A LYRICAL DRAMA

*MANTIS 'EIM' 'EZΘAΩN 'AFΩNΩN.*—OEDIP. COLON.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

PRINCE ALEXANDER MAVROCORDATO

LATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE HOSPODAR OF WALLACHIA

THE DRAMA OF HELLAS IS INSCRIBED AS AN  
IMPERFECT TOKEN OF THE ADMIRATION,  
SYMPATHY, AND FRIENDSHIP OF  
THE AUTHOR

PISA, *November 1*, 1821.

## PREFACE

THE poem of *Hellas*, written at the suggestion of the events of the moment, is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the Author feels with the cause he would celebrate.

The subject, in its present state, is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the licence is not greater than that which has been assumed by other poets who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.

The *Persae* of Aeschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilisation and social improvement.

The drama (if drama it must be called) is, however, so inartificial that I doubt whether, if recited on the Thespian waggon to an Athenian village at the Dionysiaca, it would have obtained the prize of the goat. I shall bear with equanimity any punishment, greater than the loss of such a reward, which the Aristarchi of the hour may think fit to inflict.

The only *goat-song* which I have yet attempted has, I confess, in spite of the unfavourable nature of the subject, received a greater and a more valuable portion of applause than I expected or than it deserved.

Common fame is the only authority which I can allege for the details which form the basis of the poem, and I must trespass upon the forgiveness of my readers for the display of newspaper erudition to which I have been reduced. Undoubtedly, until the conclusion of the war, it will be impossible to obtain an account of it sufficiently authentic for historical materials; but poets have their privilege, and it is unquestionable that actions of the most exalted courage have been performed by the Greeks—that they have gained more than one naval victory, and that their defeat in Wallachia was signalized by circumstances of heroism more glorious even than victory.

The apathy of the rulers of the civilised world to the astonishing circumstance of the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilisation, rising as it were from the ashes of their ruin, is something perfectly inexplicable to a mere spectator of the shows of this mortal scene. We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece. But for Greece—Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.

The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions, whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our kind, and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm, and their courage. If in many instances he is degraded

by moral and political slavery to the practice of the basest vices it engenders—and that below the level of ordinary degradation—let us reflect that the corruption of the best produces the worst, and that habits which subsist only in relation to a peculiar state of social institution may be expected to cease as soon as that relation is dissolved. In fact, the Greeks, since the admirable novel of *Anastasi* could have been a faithful picture of their manners, have undergone most important changes; the flower of their youth, returning to their country from the universities of Italy, Germany, and France, have communicated to their fellow-citizens the latest results of that social perfection of which their ancestors were the original source. The University of Chios contained before the breaking out of the revolution eight hundred students, and among them several Germans and Americans. The munificence and energy of many of the Greek princes and merchants, directed to the renovation of their country with a spirit and a wisdom which has few examples, is above all praise.

The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant, and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity and civilisation.

Russia desires to possess, not to liberate Greece; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its intended slaves, enfeeble each other until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece, and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk;—but when was the oppressor generous or just?

Should the English people ever become free, they will reflect upon the part which those who presume to represent their will have played in the great drama of the revival of liberty, with feelings which it would become them to anticipate. This is the age of the war of the oppressed against the oppressors, and every one of those ringleaders of the privileged gangs of murderers and swindlers, called Sovereigns, look to each other for aid against the common enemy, and suspend their mutual jealousies in the presence of a mightier fear. Of this holy alliance all the despots of the earth are virtual members. But a new race has arisen throughout Europe, nursed in the abhorrence of the opinions which are its chains, and she will continue to produce fresh generations to accomplish that destiny which tyrants foresee and dread.

The Spanish Peninsula is already free. France is tranquil in the enjoyment of a partial exemption from the abuses which its unnatural and feeble government are vainly attempting to revive. The seed of blood and misery has been sown in Italy, and a more vigorous race is arising to go forth to the harvest. The world waits only the news of a revolution of Germany to see the tyrants who have pinnacled themselves on its supineness precipitated into the ruin from which they shall never arise. Well do these destroyers of mankind know their enemy, when they impute the insurrection in Greece to the same spirit before which they tremble throughout the rest of Europe, and that enemy well knows the



power and the cunning of its opponents, and watches the moment of their approaching weakness and inevitable division to wrest the bloody sceptres from their grasp.

PROLOGUE TO HELLAS

*Herald of Eternity.* It is the day when all the sons of God  
Wait in the roofless senate-house, whose floor  
Is Chaos, and the immovable abyss  
Frozen by His steadfast word to hyaline

The shadow of God, and delegate 5  
Of that before whose breath the universe  
Is as a print of dew.

Hierarchs and kings  
Who from your thrones pinnaced on the past  
Sway the reluctant present, ye who sit  
Pavilioned on the radiance or the gloom 10  
Of mortal thought, which like an exhalation  
Steaming from earth, conceals the of heaven  
Which gave it birth, assemble here  
Before your Father's throne; the swift decree  
Yet hovers, and the fiery incarnation 15  
Is yet withheld, clothèd in which it shall  
annul

The fairest of those wandering isles that gem  
The sapphire space of interstellar air,  
That green and azure sphere, that earth enwrapped 20  
Less in the beauty of its tender light  
Than in an atmosphere of living spirit  
Which interpenetrating all the . . .

it rolls from realm to realm  
And age to age, and in its ebb and flow 25  
Impels the generations  
To their appointed place,  
Whilst the high Arbiter  
Beholds the strife, and at the appointed time  
Sends His decrees veiled in eternal . . . 30

Within the circuit of this pendent orb  
There lies an antique region, on which fell  
The dews of thought in the world's golden dawn  
Earliest and most benign, and from it sprung  
Temples and cities and immortal forms 35  
And harmonies of wisdom and of song,  
And thoughts, and deeds worthy of thoughts so fair.  
And when the sun of its dominion failed,  
And when the winter of its glory came,



There are two fountains in which spirits weep  
 When mortals err, Discord and Slavery named,  
 And with their bitter dew two Destinies  
 Filled each their irrevocable urns; the third,  
 Fiercest and mightiest, mingled both, and added  
 Chaos and Death, and slow Oblivion's lymph,  
 And hate and terror, and the poisoned rain

85

The Aurora of the nations. By this brow  
 Whose pores wept tears of blood, by these wide wounds,  
 By this imperial crown of agony,  
 By infamy and solitude and death,  
 For this I underwent, and by the pain  
 Of pity for those who would           for me  
 The unremembered joy of a revenge,  
 For this I felt—by Plato's sacred light,  
 Of which my spirit was a burning morrow—  
 By Greece and all she cannot cease to be.  
 Her quenchless words, sparks of immortal truth,  
 Stars of all night—her harmonies and forms,  
 Echoes and shadows of what Love adores  
 In thee, I do compel thee, send forth Fate,  
 Thy irrevocable child: let her descend,  
 A seraph-wingèd Victory [arrayed]  
 In tempest of the omnipotence of God  
 Which sweeps through all things.

90

95

100

From hollow leagues, from Tyranny which arms  
 Adverse miscreeds and emulous anarchies  
 To stamp, as on a wingèd serpent's seed,  
 Upon the name of Freedom; from the storm  
 Of faction, which like earthquake shakes and sickens  
 The solid heart of enterprise; from all  
 By which the holiest dreams of highest spirits  
 Are stars beneath the dawn . . .

105

110

She shall arise

Victorious as the world arose from Chaos!  
 And as the Heavens and the Earth arrayed  
 Their presence in the beauty and the light  
 Of Thy first smile, O Father,—as they gather  
 The spirit of Thy love which paves for them  
 Their path o'er the abyss, till every sphere  
 Shall be one living Spirit,—so shall Greece—

115

*Satan.* Be as all things beneath the empyrean,  
 Mine! Art thou eyeless like old Destiny,  
 Thou mockery-king, crowned with a wreath of thorns?

120

Whose sceptre is a reed, the broken reed  
 Which pierces thee! whose throne a chair of scorn;  
 For seest thou not beneath this crystal floor 125  
 The innumerable worlds of golden light  
 Which are my empire, and the least of them  
     which thou wouldst redeem from me?  
 Know'st thou not them my portion?  
 Or wouldst rekindle the               strife 130  
 Which our great Father then did arbitrate  
 Which he assigned to his competing sons  
 Each his apportioned realm?  
     Thou Destiny,  
 Thou who art mailed in the omnipotence  
 Of Him who sends thee forth, whate'er thy task, 135  
 Speed, spare not to accomplish, and be mine  
 Thy trophies, whether Greece again become  
 The fountain in the desert whence the earth  
 Shall drink of freedom, which shall give it strength  
 To suffer, or a gulf of hollow death 140  
 To swallow all delight, all life, all hope.  
 Go, thou Vicegerent of my will, no less  
 Than of the Father's; but lest thou shouldst faint,  
 The wingèd hounds, Famine and Pestilence,  
 Shall wait on thee, the hundred-forkèd snake 145  
 Insatiate Superstition still shall . . .  
 The earth behind thy steps, and War shall hover  
 Above, and Fraud shall gape below, and Change  
 Shall flit before thee on her dragon wings,  
 Convulsing and consuming, and I add 150  
 Three vials of the tears which daemons weep  
 When virtuous spirits through the gate of Death  
 Pass triumphing over the thorns of life,  
 Sceptres and crowns, mitres and swords and snares,  
 Trampling in scorn, like Him and Socrates. 155  
 The first is Anarchy; when Power and Pleasure,  
 Glory and science and security,  
 On Freedom hang like fruit on the green tree,  
 Then pour it forth, and men shall gather ashes.  
 The second Tyranny—  
     *Christ.*                     Obdurate spirit! 160  
 Thou seest but the Past in the To-come.  
 Pride is thy error and thy punishment.  
 Boast not thine empire, dream not that thy worlds  
 Are more than furnace-sparks or rainbow-drops  
 Before the Power that wields and kindles them. 165  
 True greatness asks not space, true excellence

Lives in the Spirit of all things that live,  
Which lends it to the worlds thou callest thine.

*Mahomet.* . . . Haste thou and fill the waning crescent  
With beams as keen as those which pierced the shadow 170  
Of Christian night rolled back upon the West,  
When the orient moon of Islam rode in triumph  
From Tmolus to the Acroceraunian snow.

Wake, thou Word  
Of God, and from the throne of Destiny 175  
Even to the utmost limit of thy way  
May Triumph

Be thou a curse on them whose creed  
Divides and multiplies the most high God.

HELLAS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

|                                                                      |  |                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| MAHMUD.                                                              |  | DAOOD.            |
| HASSAN.                                                              |  | AHASUERUS, a Jew. |
| CHORUS of Greek Captive Women. [ <i>The Phantom of Mahomet II.</i> ] |  |                   |
| <i>Messengers, Slaves, and Attendants.</i>                           |  |                   |

SCENE, Constantinople. TIME, Sunset.

SCENE.—*A Terrace on the Seraglio. MAHMUD sleeping, an Indian Slave sitting beside his Couch.*

*Chorus of Greek Captive Women.*

WE strew these opiate flowers  
On thy restless pillow,—  
They were stripped from Orient bowers,  
By the Indian billow.  
Be thy sleep 5  
Calm and deep,  
Like theirs who fell—not ours who weep!

*Indian.*

Away, unlovely dreams!  
Away, false shapes of sleep!  
Be his, as Heaven seems, 10  
Clear, and bright, and deep!  
Soft as love, and calm as death,  
Sweet as a summer night without a breath.

*Chorus.*

Sleep, sleep! our song is laden  
 With the soul of slumber; 15  
 It was sung by a Samian maiden,  
 Whose lover was of the number  
 Who now keep  
 That calm sleep  
 Whence none may wake, where none shall weep. 20

*Indian.*

I touch thy temples pale!  
 I breathe my soul on thee!  
 And could my prayers avail,  
 All my joy should be  
 Dead, and I would live to weep, 25  
 So thou mightst win one hour of quiet sleep.

*Chorus.*

Breathe low, low  
 The spell of the mighty mistress now!  
 When Conscience lulls her sated snake,  
 And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake. 30  
 Breathe low—low  
 The words which, like secret fire, shall flow  
 Through the veins of the frozen earth—low, low!

*Semichorus I.*

Life may change, but it may fly not;  
 Hope may vanish, but can die not; 35  
 Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;  
 Love repulsed,—but it returneth!

*Semichorus II.*

Yet were life a charnel where  
 Hope lay confined with Despair;  
 Yet were truth a sacred lie, 40  
 Love were lust—

*Semichorus I.*

If Liberty  
 Lent not life its soul of light,  
 Hope its iris of delight,  
 Truth its prophet's robe to wear,  
 Love its power to give and bear. 45

*Chorus.*

In the great morning of the world,  
 The Spirit of God with might unfurled  
 The flag of Freedom over Chaos,  
     And all its banded anarchs fled,  
 Like vultures frightened from Imaus, 50  
     Before an earthquake's tread.—  
 So from Time's tempestuous dawn  
 Freedom's splendour burst and shone:—  
 Thermopylae and Marathon  
 Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted, 55  
     The springing Fire.—The wingèd glory  
 On Philippi half-alighted,  
     Like an eagle on a promontory.  
 Its unwearied wings could fan  
 The quenchless ashes of Milan. 60  
 From age to age, from man to man,  
     It lived; and lit from land to land  
     Florence, Albion, Switzerland.

Then night fell; and, as from night,  
 Reassuming fiery flight, 65  
 From the West swift Freedom came,  
     Against the course of Heaven and doom,  
 A second sun arrayed in flame,  
     To burn, to kindle, to illume.  
 From far Atlantis its young beams 70  
 Chased the shadows and the dreams.  
 France, with all her sanguine steams,  
     Hid, but quenched it not; again  
 Through clouds its shafts of glory rain  
     From utmost Germany to Spain. 75

As an eagle fed with morning  
 Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,  
 When she seeks her aerie hanging  
     In the mountain-cedar's hair,  
 And her brood expect the clanging 80  
     Of her wings through the wild air,  
 Sick with famine:—Freedom, so  
 To what of Greece remaineth now  
 Returns; her hoary ruins glow  
 Like Orient mountains lost in day; 85  
     Beneath the safety of her wings  
 Her renovated nurslings prey,  
     And in the naked lightnings  
 Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.

## S H E L L E Y

Let Freedom leave—where'er she flies, 90  
 A Desert, or a Paradise:  
 Let the beautiful and the brave  
 Share her glory, or a grave.

*Semichorus I.*

With the gifts of gladness  
 Greece did thy cradle strew; 95

*Semichorus II.*

With the tears of sadness  
 Greece did thy shroud bedew!

*Semichorus I.*

With an orphan's affection  
 She followed thy bier through Time;

*Semichorus II.*

And at thy resurrection 100  
 Reappeareth, like thou, sublime!

*Semichorus I.*

If Heaven should resume thee,  
 To Heaven shall her spirit ascend;

*Semichorus II.*

If Hell should entomb thee, 105  
 To Hell shall her high hearts bend.

*Semichorus I.*

If Annihilation——

*Semichorus II.*

Dust let her glories be!  
 And a name and a nation  
 Be forgotten, Freedom, with thee!

*Indian.*

His brow grows darker—breathe not—move not! 110  
 He starts—he shudders—ye that love not,  
 With your panting loud and fast,  
 Have awakened him at last.

*Mahmud (starting from his sleep).* Man the Seraglio-guard!  
 make fast the gate!

What! from a cannonade of three short hours? 115  
 'Tis false! that breach towards the Bosphorus



Cannot be practicable yet—who stirs?  
 Stand to the match; that when the foe prevails  
 One spark may mix in reconciling ruin  
 The conqueror and the conquered! Heave the tower 120  
 Into the gap—wrench off the roof!

(*Enter HASSAN.*) Ha! what!

The truth of day lightens upon my dream  
 And I am Mahmud still.

*Hassan.* Your Sublime Highness  
 Is strangely moved.

*Mahmud.* The times do cast strange shadows  
 On those who watch and who must rule their course, 125  
 Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,  
 Be whelmed in the fierce ebb:—and these are of them.  
 Thrice has a gloomy vision hunted me  
 As thus from sleep into the troubled day;  
 It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea, 130  
 Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.  
 Would that——no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest  
 A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle  
 Of strange and secret and forgotten things.  
 I bade thee summon him:—'tis said his tribe 135  
 Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

*Hassan.* The Jew of whom I spake is old,—so old  
 He seems to have outlived a world's decay;  
 The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean  
 Seem younger still than he;—his hair and beard 140  
 Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow;  
 His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries  
 Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct  
 With light, and to the soul that quickens them  
 Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift 145  
 To the winter wind:—but from his eye looks forth  
 A life of unconsumed thought which pierces  
 The Present, and the Past, and the To-come.  
 Some say that this is he whom the great prophet  
 Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery, 150  
 Mocked with the curse of immortality.  
 Some feign that he is Enoch: others dream  
 He was pre-adamite and has survived  
 Cycles of generation and of ruin.  
 The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence 155  
 And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,  
 Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,  
 In years outstretched beyond the date of man,  
 May have attained to sovereignty and science  
 Over those strong and secret things and thoughts 160

Which others fear and know not.

*Mahmud.* I would talk  
With this old Jew.

*Hassan.* Thy will is even now  
Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern  
'Mid the Demonesi, less accessible  
Than thou or God! He who would question him 165  
Must sail alone at sunset, where the stream  
Of Ocean sleeps around those foamless isles,  
When the young moon is westering as now,  
And evening airs wander upon the wave;  
And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle, 170  
Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow  
Of his gilt prow within the sapphire water,  
Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud  
'Ahasuerus!' and the caverns round  
Will answer 'Ahasuerus!' If his prayer 175  
Be granted, a faint meteor will arise  
Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind  
Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest,  
And with the wind a storm of harmony  
Unutterably sweet, and pilot him 180  
Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus:  
Thence at the hour and place and circumstance  
Fit for the matter of their conference  
The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare  
Win the desired communion—but that shout 185  
Bodes—— [A shout within.

*Mahmud.* Evil, doubtless; like all human sounds.  
Let me converse with spirits.

*Hassan.* That shout again.

*Mahmud.* This Jew whom thou hast summoned—

*Hassan.* Will be here—

*Mahmud.* When the omnipotent hour to which are yoked  
He, I, and all things shall compel—enough! 190  
Silence those mutineers—that drunken crew,  
That crowd about the pilot in the storm.  
Ay! strike the foremost shorter by a head!  
They weary me, and I have need of rest.  
Kings are like stars—they rise and set, they have 195  
The worship of the world, but no repose. [Exeunt severally.

*Chorus.*

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever  
From creation to decay,  
Like the bubbles on a river  
Sparkling, bursting, borne away. 200

But they are still immortal  
 Who, through birth's orient portal  
 And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,  
 Clothe their unceasing flight  
 In the brief dust and light 205  
 Gathered around their chariots as they go;  
 New shapes they still may weave,  
 New gods, new laws receive,  
 Bright or dim are they as the robes they last  
 On Death's bare ribs had cast. 210

A power from the unknown God,  
 A Promethean conqueror, came;  
 Like a triumphal path he trod  
 The thorns of death and shame.  
 A mortal shape to him 215  
 Was like the vapour dim  
 Which the orient planet animates with light;  
 Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,  
 Like bloodhounds mild and tame,  
 Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight; 220  
 The moon of Mahomet  
 Arose, and it shall set:  
 While blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon  
 The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep 225  
 From one whose dreams are Paradise  
 Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,  
 And Day peers forth with her blank eyes;  
 So fleet, so faint, so fair,  
 The Powers of earth and air 230  
 Fled from the folding-star of Bethlehem:  
 Apollo, Pan, and Love,  
 And even Olympian Jove  
 Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them;  
 Our hills and seas and streams, 235  
 Dispeopled of their dreams,  
 Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,  
 Wailed for the golden years.

*Enter MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, and others.*

*Mahmud.* More gold? our ancestors bought gold with victory,  
 And shall I sell it for defeat?

*Daood.* The Janizars 240  
 Clamour for pay.

*Mahmud.* Go! bid them pay themselves

With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins  
 Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy?  
 No infidel children to impale on spears?  
 No hoary priests after that Patriarch 245  
 Who bent the curse against his country's heart,  
 Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill,  
 Blood is the seed of gold.

*Daoud.* It has been sown,  
 And yet the harvest to the sicklemen  
 Is as a grain to each.

*Mahmud.* Then, take this signet, 250  
 Unlock the seventh chamber in which lie  
 The treasures of victorious Solymán,—  
 An empire's spoil stored for a day of ruin.  
 O spirit of my sires! is it not come?  
 The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged and sleep; 255  
 But these, who spread their feast on the red earth,  
 Hunger for gold, which fills not.—See them fed;  
 Then, lead them to the rivers of fresh death. [*Exit* DAOD.

O miserable dawn, after a night 260  
 More glorious than the day which it usurped!  
 O faith in God! O power on earth! O word  
 Of the great prophet, whose o'ershadowing wings  
 Darkened the thrones and idols of the West,  
 Now bright!—For thy sake cursèd be the hour,  
 Even as a father by an evil child, 265  
 When the orient moon of Islam rolled in triumph  
 From Caucasus to White Ceraunia!  
 Ruin above, and anarchy below;  
 Terror without, and treachery within;  
 The Chalice of destruction full, and all 270  
 Thirsting to drink; and who among us dares  
 To dash it from his lips? and where is Hope?

*Hassan.* The lamp of our dominion still rides high;  
 One God is God—Mahomet is His prophet.  
 Four hundred thousand Moslems, from the limits 275  
 Of utmost Asia, irresistibly  
 Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry;  
 But not like them to weep their strength in tears:  
 They bear destroying lightning, and their step  
 Wakes earthquake to consume and overwhelm, 280  
 And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,  
 Tmolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen  
 With horrent arms; and lofty ships even now,  
 Like vapours anchored to a mountain's edge,  
 Freight with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala 285  
 The convoy of the ever-veering wind.

Samos is drunk with blood;—the Greek has paid  
 Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.  
 The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far,  
 When the fierce shout of 'Allah-illa-Allah!' 290  
 Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind  
 Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock  
 Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.  
 So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day!  
 If night is mute, yet the returning sun 295  
 Kindles the voices of the morning birds;  
 Nor at thy bidding less exultingly  
 Than birds rejoicing in the golden day,  
 The Anarchies of Africa unleash  
 Their tempest-winged cities of the sea, 300  
 To speak in thunder to the rebel world.  
 Like sulphurous clouds, half-shattered by the storm,  
 They sweep the pale Aegean, while the Queen  
 Of Ocean, bound upon her island-throne,  
 Far in the West, sits mourning that her sons 305  
 Who frown on Freedom spare a smile for thee:  
 Russia still hovers, as an eagle might  
 Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane  
 Hang tangled in inextricable fight,  
 To stoop upon the victor;—for she fears 310  
 The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine.  
 But recreant Austria loves thee as the Grave  
 Loves Pestilence, and her slow dogs of war  
 Fleshed with the chase, come up from Italy,  
 And howl upon their limits; for they see 315  
 The panther, Freedom, fled to her old cover,  
 Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood  
 Crouch round. What Anarch wears a crown or mitre,  
 Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,  
 Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes? 320  
 Our arsenals and our armouries are full;  
 Our forts defy assault; ten thousand cannon  
 Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour  
 Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city;  
 The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale 325  
 The Christian merchant; and the yellow Jew  
 Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.  
 Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds,  
 Over the hills of Anatolia,  
 Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry 330  
 Sweep;—the far flashing of their starry lances  
 Reverberates the dying light of day.  
 We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law;

But many-headed Insurrection stands  
Divided in itself, and soon must fall. 335

*Mahmud.* Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable:  
Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazoned  
Upon that shattered flag of fiery cloud  
Which leads the rear of the departing day;  
Wan emblem of an empire fading now! 340  
See how it trembles in the blood-red air,  
And like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent  
Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,  
One star with insolent and victorious light  
Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams, 345  
Like arrows through a fainting antelope,  
Strikes its weak form to death.

*Hassan.* Even as that moon  
Renews itself——

*Mahmud.* Shall we be not renewed!  
Far other bark than ours were needed now  
To stem the torrent of descending time: 350  
The Spirit that lifts the slave before his lord  
Stalks through the capitals of armed kings,  
And spreads his ensign in the wilderness:  
Exults in chains; and, when the rebel falls,  
Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust; 355  
And the inheritors of the earth, like beasts  
When earthquake is unleashed, with idiot fear  
Cower in their kingly dens—as I do now.  
What were Defeat when Victory must appal?  
Or Danger, when Security looks pale?— 360  
How said the messenger—who, from the fort  
Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle  
Of Bucharest?—that——

*Hassan.* Ibrahim's scimitar  
Drew with its gleam swift victory from Heaven,  
To burn before him in the night of battle— 365  
A light and a destruction.

*Mahmud.* Ay! the day  
Was ours: but how?——

*Hassan.* The light Wallachians,  
The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies  
Fled from the glance of our artillery  
Almost before the thunderstone alit. 370  
One half the Grecian army made a bridge  
Of safe and slow retreat, with Moslem dead;  
The other——

*Mahmud.* Speak—tremble not.—

*Hassan.* Islanded

By victor myriads, formed in hollow square  
 With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back 375  
 The deluge of our foaming cavalry;  
 Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines,  
 Our baffled army trembled like one man  
 Before a host, and gave them space; but soon,  
 From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed, 380  
 Kneading them down with fire and iron rain:  
 Yet none approached; till, like a field of corn  
 Under the hook of the swart sickleman,  
 The band, intrenched in mounds of Turkish dead,  
 Grew weak and few.—Then said the Pacha, ‘Slaves, 385  
 Render yourselves—they have abandoned you—  
 What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid?  
 We grant your lives.’ ‘Grant that which is thine own!’  
 Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died!  
 Another—‘God, and man, and hope abandon me; 390  
 But I to them, and to myself, remain  
 Constant:’—he bowed his head, and his heart burst.  
 A third exclaimed, ‘There is a refuge, tyrant,  
 Where thou dar’st not pursue, and canst not harm  
 Shouldst thou pursue; there we shall meet again.’ 395  
 Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,  
 The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment  
 Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth!  
 So these survivors, each by different ways,  
 Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable, 400  
 Met in triumphant death; and when our army  
 Closed in, while yet wonder, and awe, and shame  
 Held back the base hyaenas of the battle  
 That feed upon the dead and fly the living,  
 One rose out of the chaos of the slain: 405  
 And if it were a corpse which some dread spirit  
 Of the old saviours of the land we rule  
 Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;—  
 Or if there burned within the dying man  
 Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith 410  
 Creating what it feigned;—I cannot tell—  
 But he cried, ‘Phantoms of the free, we come!  
 Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike  
 To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,  
 And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts, 415  
 And thaw their frostwork diadems like dew;—  
 O ye who float around this clime, and weave  
 The garment of the glory which it wears,  
 Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasped,  
 Lies sepulchred in monumental thought;— 420

Progenitors of all that yet is great,  
 Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept  
 In your high ministrations, us, your sons—  
 Us first, and the more glorious yet to come!  
 And ye, weak conquerors! giants who look pale 425  
 When the crushed worm rebels beneath your tread,  
 The vultures and the dogs, your pensioners tame,  
 Are overgorged; but, like oppressors, still  
 They crave the relic of Destruction's feast.  
 The exhalations and the thirsty winds 430  
 Are sick with blood; the dew is foul with death;  
 Heaven's light is quenched in slaughter: thus, where'er  
 Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,  
 The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast  
 Of these dead limbs,—upon your streams and mountains, 435  
 Upon your fields, your gardens, and your housetops,  
 Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,  
 Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down  
 With poisoned light—Famine, and Pestilence,  
 And Panic, shall wage war upon our side! 440  
 Nature from all her boundaries is moved  
 Against ye: Time has found ye light as foam.  
 The Earth rebels; and Good and Evil stake  
 Their empire o'er the unborn world of men  
 On this one cast;—but ere the die be thrown, 445  
 The renovated genius of our race,  
 Proud umpire of the impious game, descends,  
 A seraph-wingèd Victory, bestriding  
 The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,  
 Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom, 450  
 And you to oblivion!—More he would have said,  
 But—

*Mahmud.* Died—as thou shouldst ere thy lips had painted  
 Their ruin in the hues of our success.  
 A rebel's crime, guilt with a rebel's tongue!  
 Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

*Hassan.* It may be so: 455  
 A spirit not my own wrenched me within,  
 And I have spoken words I fear and hate;  
 Yet would I die for—

*Mahmud.* Live! oh live! outlive  
 Me and this sinking empire. But the fleet—

*Hassan.* Alas!—  
*Mahmud.* The fleet which, like a flock of clouds 460  
 Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner!  
 Our wingèd castles from their merchant ships!  
 Our myriads before their weak pirate bands!



Our arms before their chains! our years of empire  
 Before their centuries of servile fear!  
 Death is awake! Repulse is on the waters!  
 They own no more the thunder-bearing banner  
 Of Mahmud; but, like hounds of a base breed,  
 Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

461

*Hassan.* Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanae saw  
 The wreck——

470

*Mahmud.* The caves of the Icarian isles  
 Told each to the other in loud mockery,  
 And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes,  
 First of the sea-convulsing fight—and, then,—  
 Thou darest to speak—senseless are the mountains:  
 Interpret thou their voice!

475

*Hassan.* My presence bore  
 A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet  
 Bore down at daybreak from the North, and hung  
 As multitudinous on the ocean line,  
 As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind.  
 Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,  
 Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle  
 Was kindled.—

480

First through the hail of our artillery  
 The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail  
 Dashed:—ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man  
 To man were grappled in the embrace of war,  
 Inextricable but by death or victory.

485

The tempest of the raging fight convulsed  
 To its crystalline depths that stainless sea,  
 And shook Heaven's roof of golden morning clouds,  
 Poised on an hundred azure mountain-isles.

490

In the brief trances of the artillery  
 One cry from the destroyed and the destroyer  
 Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapped  
 The unforeseen event, till the north wind  
 Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil  
 Of battle-smoke—then victory—victory!

495

For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers  
 Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon  
 The abhorred cross glimmered behind, before,  
 Among, around us; and that fatal sign  
 Dried with its beams the strength in Moslem hearts,  
 As the sun drinks the dew.—What more? We fled!—  
 Our noonday path over the sanguine foam  
 Was beaconed,—and the glare struck the sun pale,—  
 By our consuming transports; the fierce light  
 Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,

500

505

And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding  
 The ravening fire, even to the water's level; 510  
 Some were blown up; some, settling heavily,  
 Sunk; and the shrieks of our companions died  
 Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far,  
 Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perished!  
 We met the vultures legioned in the air 515  
 Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind;  
 They, screaming from their cloudy mountain-peaks,  
 Stooped through the sulphurous battle-smoke and perched  
 Each on the weltering carcass that we loved,  
 Like its ill angel or its damned soul, 520  
 Riding upon the bosom of the sea.  
 We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast.  
 Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea,  
 And ravening Famine left his ocean cave  
 To dwell with War, with us, and with Despair. 525  
 We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,  
 And with night, tempest——  
*Mahmud.* Cease!

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Messenger.* Your Sublime Highness,  
 That Christian hound, the Muscovite Ambassador,  
 Has left the city.—If the rebel fleet  
 Had anchored in the port, had victory 530  
 Crowned the Greek legions in the Hippodrome,  
 Panic were tamer.—Obedience and Mutiny,  
 Like giants in contention planet-struck,  
 Stand gazing on each other.—There is peace  
 In Stamboul.—

*Mahmud.* Is the grave not calmer still?  
 Its ruins shall be mine. 535

*Hassan.* Fear not the Russian:  
 The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay  
 Against the hunter.—Cunning, base, and cruel,  
 He crouches, watching till the spoil be won,  
 And must be paid for his reserve in blood. 540  
 After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian  
 That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion  
 Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields,  
 Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,  
 But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves! 545

*Enter second Messenger.*

*Second Messenger.* Nauplia, Tripolizza, Mothon, Athens,  
 Navarin, Artas, Monembasia,

Corinth, and Thebes are carried by assault,  
 And every Islamite who made his dogs  
 Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves 550  
 Passed at the edge of the sword: the lust of blood,  
 Which made our warriors drunk, is quenched in death;  
 But like a fiery plague breaks out anew  
 In deeds which make the Christian cause look pale  
 In its own light. The garrison of Patras 555  
 Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope  
 But from the Briton: at once slave and tyrant,  
 His wishes still are weaker than his fears,  
 Or he would sell what faith may yet remain  
 From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway; 560  
 And if you buy him not, your treasury  
 Is empty even of promises—his own coin.  
 The freedman of a western poet-chief  
 Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels,  
 And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont: 565  
 The aged Ali sits in Yanina  
 A crownless metaphor of empire:  
 His name, that shadow of his withered might,  
 Holds our besieging army like a spell  
 In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny; 570  
 He, bastioned in his citadel, looks forth  
 Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors  
 The ruins of the city where he reigned  
 Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reaped  
 The costly harvest his own blood matured, 575  
 Not the sower, Ali—who has bought a truce  
 From Ypsilanti with ten camel-loads  
 Of Indian gold.

*Enter a third Messenger.*

*Mahmud.* What more?

*Third Messenger.* The Christian tribes  
 Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness  
 Are in revolt;—Damascus, Hems, Aleppo 580  
 Tremble;—the Arab menaces Medina,  
 The Aethiop has intrenched himself in Sennaar,  
 And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employed,  
 Who denies homage, claims investiture  
 As price of tardy aid. Persia demands 585  
 The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians  
 Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,  
 Like mountain-twins that from each other's veins  
 Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake-spasm,  
 Shake in the general fever. Through the city, 590

Like birds before a storm, the Santons shriek,  
 And prophesyings horrible and new  
 Are heard among the crowd: that sea of men  
 Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still. 595  
 A Dervise, learn'd in the Koran, preaches  
 That it is written how the sins of Islam  
 Must raise up a destroyer even now.  
 The Greeks expect a Saviour from the West,  
 Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,  
 But in the omnipresence of that Spirit 600  
 In which all live and are. Ominous signs  
 Are blazoned broadly on the noonday sky:  
 One saw a red cross stamped upon the sun;  
 It has rained blood; and monstrous births declare  
 The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord. 605  
 The army encamped upon the Cydaris  
 Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,  
 And saw two hosts conflicting in the air,  
 The shadows doubtless of the unborn time  
 Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet 610  
 The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm  
 Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.  
 At the third watch the Spirit of the Plague  
 Was heard abroad flapping among the tents;  
 Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead. 615  
 The last news from the camp is, that a thousand  
 Have sickened, and——

*Enter a Fourth Messenger.*

*Mahmud.* And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow  
 Of some untimely rumour, speak!  
*Fourth Messenger.* One comes  
 Fainting with toil, covered with foam and blood:  
 He stood, he says, on Chelonites' 620  
 Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan  
 Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters  
 Then trembling in the splendour of the moon,  
 When as the wandering clouds unveiled or hid  
 Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets 625  
 Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer,  
 Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,  
 And smoke which strangled every infant wind  
 That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air.  
 At length the battle slept, but the Sirocco 630  
 Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds  
 Over the sea-horizon, blotting out  
 All objects—save that in the faint moon-glimpse

He saw, or dreamed he saw, the Turkish admiral  
 And two the loftiest of our ships of war, 635  
 With the bright image of that Queen of Heaven,  
 Who hid, perhaps, her face for grief, reversed;  
 And the abhorred cross—

*Enter an Attendant.*

*Attendant.* Your Sublime Highness,  
 The Jew, who——

*Mahmud.* Could not come more seasonably:  
 Bid him attend. I'll hear no more! too long 640  
 We gaze on danger through the mist of fear,  
 And multiply upon our shattered hopes  
 The images of ruin. Come what will!  
 To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps  
 Set in our path to light us to the edge 645  
 Through rough and smooth, nor can we suffer aught  
 Which He inflicts not in whose hand we are. [Exeunt.

*Semichorus I.*

Would I were the wingèd cloud  
 Of a tempest swift and loud!  
 I would scorn 650  
 The smile of morn  
 And the wave where the moonrise is born!  
 I would leave  
 The spirits of eve  
 A shroud for the corpse of the day to weave 655  
 From other threads than mine!  
 Bask in the deep blue noon divine.  
 Who would? Not I.

*Semichorus II.*

Whither to fly?

*Semichorus I.*

Where the rocks that gird th' Aegean 660  
 Echo to the battle paean  
 Of the free—  
 I would flee  
 A tempestuous herald of victory!  
 My golden rain 665  
 For the Grecian slain  
 Should mingle in tears with the bloody main,  
 And my solemn thunder-knell  
 Should ring to the world the passing-bell  
 Of Tyranny! 670

*Semichorus II.*

Ah king! wilt thou chain  
 The rack and the rain?  
 Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane?  
 The storms are free,  
 But we— 675

*Chorus.*

O Slavery! thou frost of the world's prime,  
 Killing its flowers and leaving its thorns bare!  
 Thy touch has stamped these limbs with crime,  
 These brows thy branding garland bear,  
 But the free heart, the impassive soul 680  
 Scorn thy control!

*Semichorus I.*

Let there be light! said Liberty,  
 And like sunrise from the sea,  
 Athens arose!—Around her born,  
 Shone like mountains in the morn 685  
 Glorious states;—and are they now  
 Ashes, wrecks, oblivion?

*Semichorus II.*

Go,  
 Where Thermae and Asopus swallowed  
 Persia, as the sand does foam;  
 Deluge upon deluge followed, 690  
 Discord, Macedon, and Rome:  
 And lastly thou!

*Semichorus I.*

Temples and towers,  
 Citadels and marts, and they  
 Who live and die there, have been ours,  
 And may be thine, and must decay; 695  
 But Greece and her foundations are  
 Built below the tide of war,  
 Based on the crystalline sea  
 Of thought and its eternity;  
 Her citizens, imperial spirits, 700  
 Rule the present from the past,  
 On all this world of men inherits  
 Their seal is set.

*Semichorus II.*

Hear ye the blast.  
 Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls

From ruin her Titanian walls?  
 Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones  
 Of Slavery? Argos, Corinth, Crete  
 Hear, and from their mountain thrones  
 The daemons and the nymphs repeat  
 The harmony.

705

*Semichorus I.*

I hear! I hear!

710

*Semichorus II.*

The world's eyeless charioteer,  
 Destiny, is hurrying by!  
 What faith is crushed, what empire bleeds  
 Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds?  
 What eagle-winged victory sits  
 At her right hand? what shadow flits  
 Before? what splendour rolls behind?  
 Ruin and renovation cry  
 'Who but We?'

715

*Semichorus I.*

I hear! I hear!

The hiss as of a rushing wind,  
 The roar as of an ocean foaming,  
 The thunder as of earthquake coming

720

I hear! I hear!  
 The crash as of an empire falling,  
 The shrieks as of a people calling  
 'Mercy! mercy!'—How they thrill!  
 Then a shout of 'kill! kill! kill!'  
 And then a small still voice, thus—

725

*Semichorus II.*

For  
 Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind,  
 The foul cubs like their parents are,  
 Their den is in the guilty mind,  
 And Conscience feeds them with despair.

730

*Semichorus I.*

In sacred Athens, near the fane  
 Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood:  
 Serve not the unknown God in vain,  
 But pay that broken shrine again,  
 Love for hate and tears for blood.

735

*Enter MAHMUD and AHASUERUS.*

*Mahmud.* Thou art a man, thou sayest, even as we.

*Ahasuerus.* No more!

*Mahmud.* But raised above thy fellow-men  
By thought, as I by power.

*Ahasuerus.* Thou sayest so. 740

*Mahmud.* Thou art an adept in the difficult lore  
Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest  
The flowers, and thou measurest the stars;  
Thou severest element from element;  
Thy spirit is present in the Past, and sees 745  
The birth of this old world through all its cycles  
Of desolation and of loveliness,  
And when man was not, and how man became  
The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,  
And all its narrow circles—it is much— 750  
I honour thee, and would be what thou art  
Were I not what I am; but the unborn hour,  
Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms,  
Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any  
Mighty or wise. I apprehended not 755  
What thou hast taught me, but I now perceive  
That thou art no interpreter of dreams;  
Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,  
Can make the Future present—let it come!  
Moreover thou disdainest us and ours; 760  
Thou art as God, whom thou contemplatest.

*Ahasuerus.* Disdain thee?—not the worm beneath thy feet!  
The Fathomless has care for meaner things  
Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those  
Who would be what they may not, or would seem 765  
That which they are not. Sultan! talk no more  
Of thee and me, the Future and the Past;  
But look on that which cannot change—the One,  
The unborn and the undying. Earth and ocean,  
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem 770  
The sapphire floods of interstellar air,  
This firmament pavilioned upon chaos,  
With all its cressets of immortal fire,  
Whose outwall, bastioned impregnably  
Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them 775  
As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this Whole  
Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,  
With all the silent or tempestuous workings  
By which they have been, are, or cease to be,  
Is but a vision;—all that it inherits 780  
Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles and dreams;



Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less  
 The Future and the Past are idle shadows  
 Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being:  
 Nought is but that which feels itself to be. 785

*Mahmud.* What meanest thou? Thy words stream like a tempest  
 Of dazzling mist within my brain—they shake  
 The earth on which I stand, and hang like night  
 On Heaven above me. What can they avail?  
 They cast on all things surest, brightest, best, 790  
 Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

*Ahasuerus.* Mistake me not! All is contained in each.  
 Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup  
 Is that which has been, or will be, to that  
 Which is—the absent to the present. Thought 795  
 Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,  
 Reason, Imagination, cannot die;  
 They are, what that which they regard appears,  
 The stuff whence mutability can weave  
 All that it hath dominion o'er, worlds, worms, 800  
 Empires, and superstitions. What has thought  
 To do with time, or place, or circumstance?  
 Wouldst thou behold the Future?—ask and have!  
 Knock and it shall be opened—look, and lo!  
 The coming age is shadowed on the Past 805  
 As on a glass.

*Mahmud.* Wild, wilder thoughts convulse  
 My spirit—Did not Mahomet the Second  
 Win Stamboul?

*Ahasuerus.* Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit  
 The written fortunes of thy house and faith.  
 Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell 810  
 How what was born in blood must die.

*Mahmud.* Thy words  
 Have power on me! I see——

*Ahasuerus.* What hearest thou?

*Mahmul.* A far whisper——  
 Terrible silence.

*Ahasuerus.* What succeeds?

*Mahmud.* The sound 815  
 As of the assault of an imperial city,  
 The hiss of inextinguishable fire,  
 The roar of giant cannon; the earthquaking  
 Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,  
 The shock of crags shot from strange enginery,  
 The clash of wheels, and clang of armèd hoofs, 820  
 And crash of brazen mail as of the wreck  
 Of adamantine mountains—the mad blast

Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,  
 The shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,  
 And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear, 825  
 As of a joyous infant waked and playing  
 With its dead mother's breast, and now more loud  
 The mingled battle-cry,—ha! hear I not  
 'Εν τούτῳ νίκη!' 'Allah-illa-Allah!'

*Ahasuerus.* The sulphurous mist is raised—thou seest—

*Mahmud.* A chasm, 830

As of two mountains, in the wall of Stamboul;  
 And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,  
 Like giants on the ruins of a world,  
 Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust  
 Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one 835  
 Of regal port has cast himself beneath  
 The stream of war. Another proudly clad  
 In golden arms spurs a Tartarian barb  
 Into the gap, and with his iron mace  
 Directs the torrent of that tide of men, 840  
 And seems—he is—Mahomet!

*Ahasuerus.* What thou seest  
 Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream.  
 A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that  
 Thou call'st reality. Thou mayest behold 845  
 How cities, on which Empire sleeps enthroned,  
 Bow their towered crests to mutability.  
 Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,  
 Thou mayst now learn how the full tide of power  
 Ebbs to its depths.—Inheritor of glory,  
 Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourished 850  
 With tears and toil, thou seest the mortal throes  
 Of that whose birth was but the same. The Past  
 Now stands before thee like an Incarnation  
 Of the To-come; yet wouldst thou commune with  
 That portion of thyself which was ere thou 855  
 Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death,  
 Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion  
 Which called it from the uncreated deep,  
 Yon cloud of war, with its tempestuous phantoms  
 Of raging death; and draw with mighty will 860  
 The imperial shade hither.

[*Exit AHASUERUS. The  
 Phantom of MAHOMET THE SECOND appears.*

*Mahmud.*

Approach!

*Phantom.*

I come

Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter  
 To take the living than give up the dead;  
 Yet has thy faith prevailed, and I am here.

The heavy fragments of the power which fell  
When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,  
Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices  
Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,  
Wailing for glory never to return.—

865

A later Empire nods in its decay:

870

The autumn of a greener faith is come,  
And wolfish change, like winter, howls to strip  
The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built  
Her aerie, while Dominion whelped below.

875

The storm is in its branches, and the frost  
Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects  
Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,

Ruin on ruin:—Thou art slow, my son;

The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep

A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies

880

Boundless and mute; and for thy subjects thou,

Like us, shalt rule the ghosts of murdered life,

The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now—

Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears,

And hopes that sate themselves on dust, and die!—

885

Stripped of their mortal strength, as thou of thine.

Islam must fall, but we will reign together

Over its ruins in the world of death:—

And if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed

Unfold itself even in the shape of that

890

Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe! woe!

To the weak people tangled in the grasp

Of its last spasms.

*Mahmud.* Spirit, woe to all!

Woe to the wronged and the avenger! Woe

To the destroyer, woe to the destroyed!

895

Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver!

Woe to the oppressed, and woe to the oppressor!

Woe both to those that suffer and inflict;

Those who are born and those who die! but say,

Imperial shadow of the thing I am,

900

When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish

Her consummation!

*Phantom.* Ask the cold pale Hour,

Rich in reversion of impending death,

When *he* shall fall upon whose ripe gray hairs

Sit Care, and Sorrow, and Infirmary—

905

The weight which Crime, whose wings are plumed with years,

Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart

Over the heads of men, under which burthen

They bow themselves unto the grave: fond wretch!

He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years 910  
 To come, and how in hours of youth renewed  
 He will renew lost joys, and——

*Voice without.*

Victory! Victory!

[*The Phantom vanishes.*]

*Mahmud.* What sound of the importunate earth has broken  
 My mighty trance?

*Voice without.* Victory! Victory!

*Mahmud.* Weak lightning before darkness! poor faint smile  
 Of dying Islam! Voice which art the response 916  
 Of hollow weakness! Do I wake and live?

Were there such things, or may the unquiet brain,  
 Vexed by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,  
 Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear? 920

It matters not!—for nought we see or dream,  
 Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth  
 More than it gives or teaches. Come what may,  
 The Future must become the Past, and I

As they were to whom once this present hour, 925

This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,

Seemed an Elysian isle of peace and joy

Never to be attained.—I must rebuke

This drunkenness of triumph ere it die,

And dying, bring despair. Victory! poor slaves! 930

[*Exit MAHMUD.*]

*Voice without.* Shout in the jubilee of death! The Greeks

Are as a brood of lions in the net

Round which the kingly hunters of the earth

Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food

Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death, 935

From Thule to the girdle of the world,

Come, feast! the board groans with the flesh of men;

The cup is foaming with a nation's blood,

Famine and Thirst await! eat, drink, and die!

#### *Semichorus I.*

Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream, 940  
 Salutes the rising sun, pursues the flying day!

I saw her, ghastly as a tyrant's dream,

Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,

Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilioned lay

In visions of the dawning undelight. 945

Who shall impede her flight?

Who rob her of her prey?

*Voice without.* Victory! Victory! Russia's famished eagles  
 Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.

Impale the remnant of the Greeks! despoil!  
Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust!

950

*Semichorus II.*

Thou voice which art  
The herald of the ill in splendour hid!  
Thou echo of the hollow heart  
Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode 955  
When desolation flashes o'er a world destroyed:  
Oh, bear me to those isles of jagged cloud  
Which float like mountains on the earthquake, mid  
The momentary oceans of the lightning,  
Or to some toppling promontory proud 960  
Of solid tempest whose black pyramid,  
Riven, overhangs the founts intensely bright'ning  
Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire  
Before their waves expire,  
When heaven and earth are light, and only light 965  
In the thunder-night!

*Voice without.* Victory! Victory! Austria, Russia, England,  
And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,  
Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak.  
Ho, there! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes, 970  
These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners  
Than Greeks. Kill! plunder! burn! let none remain.

*Semichorus I.*

Alas! for Liberty!  
If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years,  
Or fate, can quell the free! 975  
Alas! for Virtue, when  
Torments, or contumely, or the sneers  
Of erring judging men  
Can break the heart where it abides.  
Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure world splendid,  
Can change with its false times and tides, 981  
Like hope and terror,—  
Alas for Love!  
And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,  
If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror 985  
Before the dazzled eyes of Error,  
Alas for thee! Image of the Above.

*Semichorus II.*

Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn,  
Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn

Through many an hostile Anarchy! 990  
 At length they wept aloud, and cried, 'The Sea! the Sea!'  
 Through exile, persecution, and despair,  
 Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become  
 The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb  
 Of all whose step wakes Power lulled in her savage lair: 995  
 But Greece was as a hermit-child,  
 Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built  
 To woman's growth, by dreams so mild,  
 She knew not pain or guilt;  
 And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble 1000  
 When ye desert the free—  
 If Greece must be  
 A wreck, yet shall its fragments reassemble,  
 And build themselves again impregnably  
 In a diviner clime, 1005  
 To Amphionic music on some Cape sublime,  
 Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

*Semichorus I.*

Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made;  
 Let the free possess the Paradise they claim;  
 Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weighed 1010  
 With our ruin, our resistance, and our name!

*Semichorus II.*

Our dead shall be the seed of their decay,  
 Our survivors be the shadow of their pride,  
 Our adversity a dream to pass away—  
 Their dishonour a remembrance to abide! 1015

*Voice without.* Victory! Victory! The bought Briton sends  
 The keys of ocean to the Islamite.—  
 Now shall the blazon of the cross be veiled,  
 And British skill directing Othman might,  
 Thunder-strike rebel victory. Oh, keep holy 1020  
 This jubilee of unrevengèd blood!  
 Kill! crush! despoil! Let not a Greek escape!

*Semichorus I.*

Darkness has dawned in the East  
 On the noon of time:  
 The death-birds descend to their feast 1025  
 From the hungry clime.  
 Let Freedom and Peace flee far  
 To a sunnier strand,  
 And follow Love's folding-star  
 To the Evening land! 1030

*Semichorus II.*

The young moon has fed  
 Her exhausted horn  
 With the sunset's fire:  
 The weak day is dead,  
 But the night is not born; 1035  
 And, like loveliness panting with wild desire  
 While it trembles with fear and delight,  
 Hesperus flies from awakening night,  
 And pants in its beauty and speed with light  
 Fast-flashing, soft, and bright. 1040  
 Thou beacon of love! thou lamp of the free!  
 Guide us far, far away,  
 To climes where now veiled by the ardour of day  
 Thou art hidden  
 From waves on which weary Noon 1045  
 Faints in her summer swoon,  
 Between kingless continents sinless as Eden,  
 Around mountains and islands inviolably  
 Pranked on the sapphire sea.

*Semichorus I.*

Through the sunset of hope, 1050  
 Like the shapes of a dream,  
 What Paradise islands of glory gleam!  
 Beneath Heaven's cope,  
 Their shadows more clear float by—  
 The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky, 1055  
 The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe  
 Burst, like morning on dream, or like Heaven on death,  
 Through the walls of our prison;  
 And Greece, which was dead, is arisen!

*Chorus.*

The world's great age begins anew, 1060  
 The golden years return,  
 The earth doth like a snake renew  
 Her winter weeds outworn:  
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,  
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream. 1065  
 A brighter Hellas rears its mountains  
 From waves serener far;  
 A new Peneus rolls his fountains  
 Against the morning star.  
 Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep 1070  
 Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,  
 Fraught with a later prize;  
 Another Orpheus sings again,  
 And loves, and weeps, and dies. 1075  
 A new Ulysses leaves once more  
 Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,  
 If earth Death's scroll must be!  
 Nor mix with Laian rage the joy 1080  
 Which dawns upon the free:  
 Although a subtler Sphinx renew  
 Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,  
 And to remoter time 1085  
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,  
 The splendour of its prime;  
 And leave, if nought so bright may live,  
 All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose 1090  
 Shall burst, more bright and good  
 Than all who fell, than One who rose,  
 Than many unsubdued:  
 Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,  
 But votive tears and symbol flowers. 1095

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?  
 Cease! must men kill and die?  
 Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn  
 Of bitter prophecy.  
 The world is weary of the past, 1100  
 Oh, might it die or rest at last!

## NOTES

(1) *The quenchless ashes of Milan* [l. 60, p. 509].

MILAN was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin. See Sismondi's *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors.

(2) *The Chorus* [p. 512].

The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as **true** in their relation to the worship they superseded, and that which in all



probability they will supersede, without considering their merits in a relation more universal. The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and to use a common and inadequate phrase, *clothe themselves in matter*, with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world.

The concluding verses indicate a progressive state of more or less exalted existence, according to the degree of perfection which every distinct intelligence may have attained. Let it not be supposed that I mean to dogmatise upon a subject, concerning which all men are equally ignorant, or that I think the Gordian knot of the origin of evil can be disentangled by that or any similar assertions. The received hypothesis of a Being resembling men in the moral attributes of His nature, having called us out of non-existence, and after inflicting on us the misery of the commission of error, should superadd that of the punishment and the privations consequent upon it, still would remain inexplicable and incredible. That there is a true solution of the riddle, and that in our present state that solution is unattainable by us, are propositions which may be regarded as equally certain: meanwhile, as it is the province of the poet to attach himself to those ideas which exalt and ennoble humanity, let him be permitted to have conjectured the condition of that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for immortality. Until better arguments can be produced than sophisms which disgrace the cause, this desire itself must remain the strongest and the only presumption that eternity is the inheritance of every thinking being.

(3) *No hoary priests after that Patriarch* [l. 245, p. 514].

The Greek Patriarch, after having been compelled to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents, was put to death by the Turks.

Fortunately the Greeks have been taught that they cannot buy security by degradation, and the Turks, though equally cruel, are less cunning than the smooth-faced tyrants of Europe. As to the anathema, his Holiness might as well have thrown his mitre at Mount Athos for any effect that it produced. The chiefs of the Greeks are almost all men of comprehension and enlightened views on religion and politics.

(4) *The freedman of a western poet-chief* [l. 563, p. 521].

A Greek who had been Lord Byron's servant commands the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or of greatness whose connection with our character is determined by events.

(5) *The Greeks expect a Saviour from the West* [l. 598, p. 522].

It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a seaport near Lacedaemon in an American brig. The association of names and ideas is irre-

sistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in Greece.

(6) *The sound as of the assault of an imperial city* [ll. 814-15, p. 527].

For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1453, see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. xii, p. 223.

The manner of the invocation of the spirit of Mahomet the Second will be censured as over subtle. I could easily have made the Jew a regular conjuror, and the Phantom an ordinary ghost. I have preferred to represent the Jew as disclaiming all pretension, or even belief, in supernatural agency, and as tempting Mahmud to that state of mind in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensations through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and the excess of passion animating the creations of imagination.

It is a sort of natural magic, susceptible of being exercised in a degree by any one who should have made himself master of the secret associations of another's thoughts.

(7) *The Chorus* [p. 533].

The final chorus is indistinct and obscure, as the event of the living Drama whose arrival it foretells. Prophecies of wars, and rumours of wars, etc., may safely be made by poet or prophet in any age, but to anticipate however darkly a period of regeneration and happiness is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign. It will remind the reader '*magno nec proximus intervallo*' of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits overleaping the actual reign of evil which we endure and bewail, already saw the possible and perhaps approaching state of society in which the '*lion shall lie down with the lamb*,' and '*omnis feret omnia tellus*.' Let these great names be my authority and my excuse.

(8) *Saturn and Love their long repose shall burst* [l. 1090, p. 534].

Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. *All those who fell*, or the Gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; the *One who rose*, or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the Pagan World were amerced of their worship; and *the many unsubdued*, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually increasing, activity. The Grecian gods seem indeed to have been personally more innocent, although it cannot be said, that as far as temperance and chastity are concerned, they gave so edifying an example as their successor. The sublime human character of Jesus Christ was deformed by an imputed identification with a Power, who tempted, betrayed, and punished the innocent

beings who were called into existence by His sole will; and for the period of a thousand years, the spirit of this most just, wise, and benevolent of men has been propitiated with myriads of hecatombs of those who approached the nearest to His innocence and wisdom, sacrificed under every aggravation of atrocity and variety of torture. The horrors of the Mexican, the Peruvian, and the Indian superstitions are well known.

#### NOTE ON HELLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

THE South of Europe was in a state of great political excitement at the beginning of the year 1821. The Spanish Revolution had been a signal to Italy; secret societies were formed; and, when Naples rose to declare the Constitution, the call was responded to from Brundisium to the foot of the Alps. To crush these attempts to obtain liberty, early in 1821 the Austrians poured their armies into the Peninsula: at first their coming rather seemed to add energy and resolution to a people long enslaved. The Piedmontese asserted their freedom; Genoa threw off the yoke of the King of Sardinia; and, as if in playful imitation, the people of the little state of Massa and Carrara gave the *congé* to their sovereign, and set up a republic.

Tuscany alone was perfectly tranquil. It was said that the Austrian minister presented a list of sixty Carbonari to the Grand Duke, urging their imprisonment; and the Grand Duke replied, 'I do not know whether these sixty men are Carbonari, but I know, if I imprison them, I shall directly have sixty thousand start up.' But, though the Tuscans had no desire to disturb the paternal government beneath whose shelter they slumbered, they regarded the progress of the various Italian revolutions with intense interest, and hatred for the Austrians was warm in every bosom. But they had slender hopes; they knew that the Neapolitans would offer no fit resistance to the regular German troops, and that the overthrow of the constitution in Naples would act as a decisive blow against all struggles for liberty in Italy.

We have seen the rise and progress of reform. But the Holy Alliance was alive and active in those days, and few could dream of the peaceful triumph of liberty. It seemed then that the armed assertion of freedom in the South of Europe was the only hope of the liberals, as, if it prevailed, the nations of the north would imitate the example. Happily the reverse has proved the fact. The countries accustomed to the exercise of the privileges of freemen, to a limited extent, have extended, and are extending, these limits. Freedom and knowledge have now a chance of proceeding hand in hand; and, if it continue thus, we may hope for the durability of both. Then, as I have said—in 1821—Shelley, as well as every other lover of liberty, looked upon the struggles in Spain and Italy as decisive of the destinies of the world, probably for centuries to come. The interest he took in the progress of affairs was intense. When Genoa declared itself free, his hopes were at their highest. Day after day he read the bulletins of the Austrian army, and sought eagerly to gather tokens

of its defeat. He heard of the revolt of Genoa with emotions of transport. His whole heart and soul were in the triumph of the cause. We were living at Pisa at that time; and several well-informed Italians, at the head of whom we may place the celebrated Vaccà, were accustomed to seek for sympathy in their hopes from Shelley: they did not find such for the despair they too generally experienced, founded on contempt for their southern countrymen.

While the fate of the progress of the Austrian armies then invading Naples was yet in suspense, the news of another revolution filled him with exultation. We had formed the acquaintance at Pisa of several Constantinopolitan Greeks, of the family of Prince Caradja, formerly Hospodar of Wallachia; who, hearing that the bowstring, the accustomed finale of his vicerealty, was on the road to him, escaped with his treasures, and took up his abode in Tuscany. Among these was the gentleman to whom the drama of *Hellas* is dedicated. Prince Mavrocordato was warmed by those aspirations for the independence of his country which filled the hearts of many of his countrymen. He often intimated the possibility of an insurrection in Greece; but we had no idea of its being so near at hand, when, on the 1st of April 1821, he called on Shelley, bringing the proclamation of his cousin, Prince Ypsilanti, and, radiant with exultation and delight, declared that henceforth Greece would be free.

Shelley had hymned the dawn of liberty in Spain and Naples, in two odes dictated by the warmest enthusiasm; he felt himself naturally impelled to decorate with poetry the uprising of the descendants of that people whose works he regarded with deep admiration, and to adopt the vaticinatory character in prophesying their success. *Hellas* was written in a moment of enthusiasm. It is curious to remark how well he overcomes the difficulty of forming a drama out of such scant materials. His prophecies, indeed, came true in their general, not their particular, purport. He did not foresee the death of Lord Londonderry, which was to be the epoch of a change in English politics, particularly as regarded foreign affairs; nor that the navy of his country would fight for instead of against the Greeks, and by the battle of Navarino secure their enfranchisement from the Turks. Almost against reason, as it appeared to him, he resolved to believe that Greece would prove triumphant; and in this spirit, auguring ultimate good, yet grieving over the vicissitudes to be endured in the interval, he composed his drama.

*Hellas* was among the last of his compositions, and is among the most beautiful. The choruses are singularly imaginative, and melodious in their versification. There are some stanzas that beautifully exemplify Shelley's peculiar style; as, for instance, the assertion of the intellectual empire which must be for ever the inheritance of the country of Homer, Sophocles, and Plato:—

‘But Greece and her foundations are  
Built below the tide of war,  
Based on the crystalline sea  
Of thought and its eternity.’

And again, that philosophical truth felicitously imaged forth—

‘Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind,  
The foul cubs like their parents are,  
Their den is in the guilty mind,  
And Conscience feeds them with despair.’

The conclusion of the last chorus is among the most beautiful of his lyrics. The imagery is distinct and majestic; the prophecy, such as poets love to dwell upon, the Regeneration of Mankind—and that regeneration reflecting back splendour on the foregone time, from which it inherits so much of intellectual wealth, and memory of past virtuous deeds, as must render the possession of happiness and peace of tenfold value.

## FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED DRAMA

THE following fragments are part of a Drama undertaken for the amusement of the individuals who composed our intimate society, but left unfinished. I have preserved a sketch of the story as far as it had been shadowed in the poet’s mind.

An Enchantress, living in one of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, saves the life of a Pirate, a man of savage but noble nature. She becomes enamoured of him; and he, inconstant to his mortal love, for a while returns her passion; but at length, recalling the memory of her whom he left, and who laments his loss, he escapes from the Enchanted Island, and returns to his lady. His mode of life makes him again go to sea, and the Enchantress seizes the opportunity to bring him, by a spirit-brewed tempest, back to her Island.—[MRS. SHELLEY’S NOTE, 1839.]

SCENE.—*Before the Cavern of the Indian Enchantress.*

*The ENCHANTRESS comes forth.*

*Enchantress.*

HE came like a dream in the dawn of life,  
He fled like a shadow before its noon;  
He is gone, and my peace is turned to strife,  
And I wander and wane like the weary moon.  
O, sweet Echo, wake,  
And for my sake  
Make answer the while my heart shall break!

5

But my heart has a music which Echo’s lips,  
Though tender and true, yet can answer not,  
And the shadow that moves in the soul’s eclipse  
Can return not the kiss by his now forgot;  
Sweet lips! he who hath  
On my desolate path  
Cast the darkness of absence, worse than death!

10

*The ENCHANTRESS makes her spell: she is answered by a Spirit.*

*Spirit.* Within the silent centre of the earth 15  
 My mansion is; where I have lived insphered  
 From the beginning, and around my sleep  
 Have woven all the wondrous imagery  
 Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world;  
 Infinite depths of unknown elements 20  
 Massed into one impenetrable mask;  
 Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins  
 Of gold and stone, and adamant iron.  
 And as a veil in which I walk through Heaven  
 I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves, and clouds,  
 And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns 26  
 In the dark space of interstellar air.

A good Spirit, who watches over the Pirate's fate, leads, in a mysterious manner, the lady of his love to the Enchanted Isle. She is accompanied by a Youth, who loves the lady, but whose passion she returns only with a sisterly affection. The ensuing scene takes place between them on their arrival at the Isle. [MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE, 1839.]

## ANOTHER SCENE

INDIAN YOUTH *and* LADY.

*Indian.* And, if my grief should still be dearer to me  
 Than all the pleasures in the world beside,  
 Why would you lighten it?—  
*Lady.* I offer only 30  
 That which I seek, some human sympathy  
 In this mysterious island.  
*Indian.* Oh! my friend,  
 My sister, my beloved!—What do I say?  
 My brain is dizzy, and I scarce know whether  
 I speak to thee or her.  
*Lady.* Peace, perturbed heart! 35  
 I am to thee only as thou to mine,  
 The passing wind which heals the brow at noon,  
 And may strike cold into the breast at night,  
 Yet cannot linger where it soothes the most,  
 Or long soothe could it linger.  
*Indian.* But you said 40  
 You also loved?  
*Lady.* Loved! Oh, I love. Methinks  
 This word of love is fit for all the world,  
 And that for gentle hearts another name  
 Would speak of gentler thoughts than the world owns.  
 I have loved.

*Indian.* And thou lovest not? if so,  
Young as thou art thou canst afford to weep. 45

*Lady.* Oh! would that I could claim exemption  
From all the bitterness of that sweet name.  
I loved, I love, and when I love no more  
Let joys and grief perish, and leave despair 50  
To ring the knell of youth. He stood beside me,  
The embodied vision of the brightest dream,  
Which like a dawn heralds the day of life;  
The shadow of his presence made my world  
A Paradise. All familiar things he touched, 55  
All common words he spoke, became to me  
Like forms and sounds of a diviner world.  
He was as is the sun in his fierce youth,  
As terrible and lovely as a tempest;  
He came, and went, and left me what I am. 60  
Alas! Why must I think how oft we two  
Have sate together near the river springs,  
Under the green pavilion which the willow  
Spreads on the floor of the unbroken fountain,  
Strewn, by the nurslings that linger there, 65  
Over that islet paved with flowers and moss,  
While the musk-rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,  
Showered on us, and the dove mourned in the pine,  
Sad prophetess of sorrows not her own?  
The crane returned to her unfrozen haunt, 70  
And the false cuckoo bade the spray good morn;  
And on a wintry bough the widowed bird,  
Hid in the deepest night of ivy-leaves,  
Renewed the vigils of a sleepless sorrow.  
I, left like her, and leaving one like her, 75  
Alike abandoned and abandoning  
(Oh! unlike her in this!) the gentlest youth,  
Whose love had made my sorrows dear to him,  
Even as my sorrow made his love to me!

*Indian.* One curse of Nature stamps in the same mould  
The features of the wretched; and they are 81  
As like as violet to violet,  
When memory, the ghost, their odours keeps  
Mid the cold relics of abandoned joy.—  
Proceed.

*Lady.* He was a simple innocent boy. 85  
I loved him well, but not as he desired;  
Yet even thus he was content to be:—  
A short content, for I was——

*Indian* [*aside*]. God of Heaven!  
From such an islet, such a river-spring——!

I dare not ask her if there stood upon it 90  
 A pleasure-dome surmounted by a crescent,  
 With steps to the blue water. [*Aloud.*] It may be  
 That Nature masks in life several copies  
 Of the same lot, so that the sufferers  
 May feel another's sorrow as their own, 95  
 And find in friendship what they lost in love.  
 That cannot be; yet it is strange that we,  
 From the same scene, by the same path to this  
 Realm of abandonment—— But speak! your breath——  
 Your breath is like soft music, your words are 100  
 The echoes of a voice which on my heart  
 Sleeps like a melody of early days.  
 But as you said——

*Lady.* He was so awful, yet  
 So beautiful in mystery and terror,  
 Calming me as the loveliness of heaven 105  
 Soothes the unquiet sea:—and yet not so,  
 For he seemed stormy, and would often seem  
 A quenchless sun masked in portentous clouds;  
 For such his thoughts, and even his actions were;  
 But he was not of them, nor they of him, 110  
 But as they hid his splendour from the earth.  
 Some said he was a man of blood and peril,  
 And steeped in bitter infamy to the lips.  
 More need was there I should be innocent,  
 More need that I should be most true and kind, 115  
 And much more need that there should be found one  
 To share remorse and scorn and solitude,  
 And all the ills that wait on those who do  
 The tasks of ruin in the world of life.  
 He fled, and I have followed him.

*Indian.* Such a one 120  
 Is he who was the winter of my peace.  
 But, fairest stranger, when didst thou depart  
 From the far hills where rise the springs of India?  
 How didst thou pass the intervening sea?

*Lady.* If I be sure I am not dreaming now, 125  
 I should not doubt to say it was a dream.  
 Methought a star came down from heaven,  
 And rested mid the plants of India,  
 Which I had given a shelter from the frost  
 Within my chamber. There the meteor lay, 130  
 Panting forth light among the leaves and flowers,  
 As if it lived, and was outworn with speed;  
 Or that it loved, and passion made the pulse  
 Of its bright life throb like an anxious heart,



Till it diffused itself, and all the chamber 135  
 And walls seemed melted into emerald fire  
 That burned not; in the midst of which appeared  
 A spirit like a child, and laughed aloud  
 A thrilling peal of such sweet merriment  
 As made the blood tingle in my warm feet: 140  
 Then bent over a vase, and murmuring  
 Low, unintelligible melodies,  
 Placed something in the mould like melon-seeds,  
 And slowly faded, and in place of it  
 A soft hand issued from the veil of fire, 145  
 Holding a cup like a magnolia flower,  
 And poured upon the earth within the vase  
 The element with which it overflowed,  
 Brighter than morning light, and purer than  
 The water of the springs of Himalah. 150

*Indian.* You waked not?

*Lady.* Not until my dream became

Like a child's legend on the tideless sand.  
 Which the first foam erases half, and half  
 Leaves legible. At length I rose, and went,  
 Visiting my flowers from pot to pot, and thought 155  
 To set new cuttings in the empty urns,  
 And when I came to that beside the lattice,  
 I saw two little dark-green leaves  
 Lifting the light mould at their birth, and then  
 I half-remembered my forgotten dream. 160  
 And day by day, green as a gourd in June,  
 The plant grew fresh and thick, yet no one knew  
 What plant it was; its stem and tendrils seemed  
 Like emerald snakes, mottled and diamonded  
 With azure mail and streaks of woven silver; 165  
 And all the sheaths that folded the dark buds  
 Rose like the crest of cobra-di-capel,  
 Until the golden eye of the bright flower.  
 Through the dark lashes of those veined lids,  
 . . . disencumbered of their silent sleep, 170  
 Gazed like a star into the morning light.  
 Its leaves were delicate, you almost saw  
 The pulses  
 With which the purple velvet flower was fed  
 To overflow, and like a poet's heart 175  
 Changing bright fancy to sweet sentiment,  
 Changed half the light to fragrance. It soon fell,  
 And to a green and dewy embryo-fruit  
 Left all its treasured beauty. Day by day  
 I nursed the plant, and on the double flute 180

Played to it on the sunny winter days  
 Soft melodies, as sweet as April rain  
 On silent leaves, and sang those words in which  
 Passion makes Echo taunt the sleeping strings;  
 And I would send tales of forgotten love 185  
 Late into the lone night, and sing wild songs  
 Of maids deserted in the olden time,  
 And weep like a soft cloud in April's bosom  
 Upon the sleeping eyelids of the plant,  
 So that perhaps it dreamed that Spring was come, 190  
 And crept abroad into the moonlight air,  
 And loosened all its limbs, as, noon by noon,  
 The sun averted less his oblique beam.

*Indian.* And the plant died not in the frost?

*Lady.* It grew;

And went out of the lattice which I left 195  
 Half open for it, trailing its quaint spires  
 Along the garden and across the lawn,  
 And down the slope of moss and through the tufts  
 Of wild-flower roots, and stumps of trees o'ergrown  
 With simple lichens, and old hoary stones, 200  
 On to the margin of the glassy pool,  
 Even to a nook of unblown violets  
 And lilies-of-the-valley yet unborn,  
 Under a pine with ivy overgrown.  
 And there its fruit lay like a sleeping lizard 205  
 Under the shadows; but when Spring indeed  
 Came to unswathe her infants, and the lilies  
 Peeped from their bright green masks to wonder at  
 This shape of autumn couched in their recess,  
 Then it dilated, and it grew until 210  
 One half lay floating on the fountain wave,  
 Whose pulse, elapsed in unlike sympathies,  
 Kept time  
 Among the snowy water-lily buds.  
 Its shape was such as summer melody 215  
 Of the south wind in spicy vales might give  
 To some light cloud bound from the golden dawn  
 To fairy isles of evening, and it seemed  
 In hue and form that it had been a mirror  
 Of all the hues and forms around it and 220  
 Upon it pictured by the sunny beams  
 Which, from the bright vibrations of the pool,  
 Were thrown upon the rafters and the roof  
 Of boughs and leaves, and on the pillared stems  
 Of the dark sylvan temple, and reflections 225  
 Of every infant flower and star of moss

## THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

545

And veined leaf in the azure odorous air.  
 And thus it lay in the Elysian calm  
 Of its own beauty, floating on the line  
 Which, like a film in purest space, divided 230  
 The heaven beneath the water from the heaven  
 Above the clouds; and every day I went  
 Watching its growth and wondering;  
 And as the day grew hot, methought I saw  
 A glassy vapour dancing on the pool, 235  
 And on it little quaint and filmy shapes,  
 With dizzy motion, wheel and rise and fall,  
 Like clouds of gnats with perfect lineaments.

O friend, sleep was a veil uplift from Heaven—  
 As if Heaven dawned upon the world of dream—  
 When darkness rose on the extinguished day  
 Out of the eastern wilderness.

240

*Indian.* I too  
 Have found a moment's paradise in sleep  
 Half compensate a hell of waking sorrow.

## THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

SWIFT as a spirit hastening to his task  
 Of glory and of good, the Sun sprang forth  
 Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask

Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth—  
 The smokeless altars of the mountain snows  
 Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth 5

Of light, the Ocean's orison arose,  
 To which the birds tempered their matin lay.  
 All flowers in field or forest which uncloze

Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day,  
 Swinging their censers in the element,  
 With orient incense lit by the new ray

10

Burned slow and inconsumably, and sent  
 Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air;  
 And, in succession due, did continent,

15

Isle, ocean, and all things that in them wear  
 The form and character of mortal mould,  
 Rise as the Sun their father rose, to bear

Their portion of the toil, which he of old  
Took as his own, and then imposed on them: 20  
But I, whom thoughts which must remain untold

Had kept as wakeful as the stars that gem  
The cone of night, now they were laid asleep  
Stretched my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem

Which an old chestnut flung athwart the steep 25  
Of a green Apennine: before me fled  
The night; behind me rose the day; the deep

Was at my feet, and Heaven above my head,—  
When a strange trance over my fancy grew  
Which was not slumber, for the shade it spread 30

Was so transparent, that the scene came through  
As clear as when a veil of light is drawn  
O'er evening hills they glimmer; and I knew

That I had felt the freshness of that dawn  
Bathe in the same cold dew my brow and hair, 35  
And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn

Under the self-same bough, and heard as there  
The birds, the fountains and the ocean hold  
Sweet talk in music through the enamoured air,  
And then a vision on my brain was rolled. 40

---

As in that trance of wondrous thought I lay,  
This was the tenour of my waking dream:—  
Methought I sate beside a public way

Thick strewn with summer dust, and a great stream  
Of people there was hurrying to and fro, 45  
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,

All hastening onward, yet none seemed to know  
Whither he went, or whence he came, or why  
He made one of the multitude, and so

Was borne amid the crowd, as through the sky 50  
One of the million leaves of summer's bier;  
Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,

Mixed in one mighty torrent did appear,  
Some flying from the thing they feared, and some  
Seeking the object of another's fear; 55.

And others, as with steps towards the tomb,  
Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath,  
And others mournfully within the gloom

Of their own shadow walked, and called it death;  
And some fled from it as it were a ghost, 60  
Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath:

But more, with motions which each other crossed,  
Pursued or shunned the shadows the clouds threw,  
Or birds within the noonday aether lost,

Upon that path where flowers never grew,— 65  
And, weary with vain toil and faint for thirst,  
Heard not the fountains, whose melodious dew

Out of their mossy cells forever burst;  
Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told  
Of grassy paths and wood-lawns interspersed 70

With overarching elms and caverns cold,  
And violet banks where sweet dreams brood, but they  
Pursued their serious folly as of old.

And as I gazed, methought that in the way  
The throng grew wilder, as the woods of June 75  
When the south wind shakes the extinguished day,

And a cold glare, intenser than the noon,  
But icy cold, obscured with blinding light  
The sun, as he the stars. Like the young moon—

When on the sunlit limits of the night 80  
Her white shell trembles amid crimson air,  
And whilst the sleeping tempest gathers might—

Doth, as the herald of its coming, bear  
The ghost of its dead mother, whose dim form  
Bends in dark aether from her infant's chair,— 85

So came a chariot on the silent storm  
Of its own rushing splendour, and a Shape  
So sate within, as one whom years deform,

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape,  
Crouching within the shadow of a tomb; 90  
And o'er what seemed the head a cloud-like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint aethereal gloom  
 Tempering the light. Upon the chariot-beam  
 A Janus-visaged Shadow did assume

The guidance of that wonder-wingèd team; 95  
 The shapes which drew it in thick lightnings  
 Were lost:—I heard alone on the air's soft stream

The music of their ever-moving wings.  
 All the four faces of that Charioteer  
 Had their eyes banded; little profit brings 100

Speed in the van and blindness in the rear,  
 Nor then avail the beams that quench the sun,—  
 Or that with banded eyes could pierce the sphere

Of all that is, has been or will be done;  
 So ill was the car guided—but it passed 105  
 With solemn speed majestically on.

The crowd gave way, and I arose aghast,  
 Or seemed to rise, so mighty was the trance,  
 And saw, like clouds upon the thunder-blast,

The million with fierce song and maniac dance 110  
 Raging around—such seemed the jubilee  
 As when to greet some conqueror's advance

Imperial Rome poured forth her living sea  
 From senate-house, and forum, and theatre,  
 When upon the free 115

Had bound a yoke, which soon they stooped to bear.  
 Nor wanted here the just similitude  
 Of a triumphal pageant, for where'er

The chariot rolled, a captive multitude  
 Was driven;—all those who had grown old in power 120  
 Or misery,—all who had their age subdued

By action or by suffering, and whose hour  
 Was drained to its last sand in weal or woe,  
 So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower;—

All those whose fame or infamy must grow 125  
 Till the great winter lay the form and name  
 Of this green earth with them for ever low;—

All but the sacred few who could not tame  
 Their spirits to the conquerors—but as soon  
 As they had touched the world with living flame, 130

Fled back like eagles to their native noon,  
Or those who put aside the diadem  
Of earthly thrones or gems . . .

Were there, of Athens or Jerusalem,  
Were neither mid the mighty captives seen, 135  
Nor mid the ribald crowd that followed them,

Nor those who went before fierce and obscene.  
The wild dance maddens in the van, and those  
Who lead it—fleet as shadows on the green,

Outspeed the chariot, and without repose 140  
Mix with each other in tempestuous measure  
To savage music, wilder as it grows,

They, tortured by their agonizing pleasure,  
Convulsed and on the rapid whirlwinds spun  
Of that fierce Spirit, whose unholy leisure 145

Was soothed by mischief since the world begun,  
Throw back their heads and loose their streaming hair;  
And in their dance round her who dims the sun,

Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air  
As their feet twinkle; they recede, and now 150  
Bending within each other's atmosphere,

Kindle invisibly—and as they glow,  
Like moths by light attracted and repelled,  
Oft to their bright destruction come and go,

Till like two clouds into one vale impelled, 155  
That shake the mountains when their lightnings mingle  
And die in rain—the fiery band which held

Their natures, snaps—while the shock still may tingle;  
One falls and then another in the path  
Senseless—nor is the desolation single, 160

Yet ere I can say *where*—the chariot hath  
Passed over them—nor other trace I find  
But as of foam after the ocean's wrath

Is spent upon the desert shore;—behind,  
Old men and women foully disarrayed, 165  
Shake their gray hairs in the insulting wind,

And follow in the dance, with limbs decayed,  
Seeking to reach the light which leaves them still  
Farther behind and deeper in the shade.

But not the less with impotence of will 170  
 They wheel, though ghastly shadows interpose  
 Round them and round each other, and fulfil

Their work, and in the dust from whence they rose  
 Sink, and corruption veils them as they lie,  
 And past in these performs what in those. 175

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry,  
 Half to myself I said—'And what is this?  
 Whose shape is that within the car? And why—'

I would have added—'is all here amiss?—'  
 But a voice answered—'Life!'—I turned, and knew 180  
 (O Heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness!)

That what I thought was an old root which grew  
 To strange distortion out of the hill side,  
 Was indeed one of those deluded crew,

And that the grass, which methought hung so wide 185  
 And white, was but his thin discoloured hair,  
 And that the holes he vainly sought to hide,

Were or had been eyes:—'If thou canst, forbear  
 To join the dance, which I had well forborne!' 190  
 Said the grim Feature (of my thought aware).

'I will unfold that which to this deep scorn  
 Led me and my companions, and relate  
 The progress of the pageant since the morn;

'If thirst of knowledge shall not then abate,  
 Follow it thou even to the night, but I 195  
 Am weary.'—Then like one who with the weight

Of his own words is staggered, wearily  
 He paused; and ere he could resume, I cried:  
 'First, who art thou?'—'Before thy memory,

'I feared, loved, hated, suffered, did and died, 200  
 And if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit  
 Had been with purer nutriment supplied,

'Corruption would not now thus much inherit  
 Of what was once Rousseau,—nor this disguise  
 Stain that which ought to have disdained to wear it; 205

'If I have been extinguished, yet there rise  
 A thousand beacons from the spark I bore'—  
 'And who are those chained to the car?'—'The wise,



'The great, the unforgotten,—they who wore  
Mitres and helms and crowns, or wreaths of light,  
Signs of thought's empire over thought—their lore

210

'Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might  
Could not repress the mystery within,  
And for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night

'Caught them ere evening,'—'Who is he with chin  
Upon his breast, and hands crossed on his chain?'—  
'The child of a fierce hour; he sought to win

215

'The world, and lost all that it did contain  
Of greatness, in its hope destroyed; and more  
Of fame and peace than virtue's self can gain

220

'Without the opportunity which bore  
Him on its eagle pinions to the peak  
From which a thousand climbers have before

'Fallen, as Napoleon fell.'—I felt my cheek  
Alter, to see the shadow pass away,  
Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak

225

That every pigmy kicked it as it lay;  
And much I grieved to think how power and will  
In opposition rule our mortal day,

And why God made irreconcilable  
Good and the means of good; and for despair  
I half disdained mine eyes' desire to fill

230

With the spent vision of the times that were  
And scarce have ceased to be.—'Dost thou behold,'  
Said my guide, 'those spoilers spoiled, Voltaire,

235

'Frederick, and Paul, Catherine, and Leopold,  
And hoary anarchs, demagogues, and sage—  
names which the world thinks always old,

'For in the battle Life and they did wage,  
She remained conqueror. I was overcome  
By my own heart alone, which neither age,

240

'Nor tears, nor infamy, nor now the tomb  
Could temper to its object.'—'Let them pass,'  
I cried, 'the world and its mysterious doom

'Is not so much more glorious than it was,  
That I desire to worship those who drew  
New figures on its false and fragile glass

245

- 'As the old faded.'—'Figures ever new  
 Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may;  
 We have but thrown, as those before us threw, 250
- 'Our shadows on it as it passed away.  
 But mark how chained to the triumphal chair  
 The mighty phantoms of an elder day;
- 'All that is mortal of great Plato there  
 Expiates the joy and woe his master knew not; 255  
 The star that ruled his doom was far too fair.
- 'And life, where long that flower of Heaven grew not,  
 Conquered that heart by love, which gold, or pain,  
 Or age, or sloth, or slavery could subdue not.
- 'And near him walk the twain, 260  
 The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion  
 Followed as tame as vulture in a chain.
- 'The world was darkened beneath either pinion  
 Of him whom from the flock of conquerors  
 Fame singled out for her thunder-bearing minion; 265
- 'The other long outlived both woes and wars,  
 Throned in the thoughts of men, and still had kept  
 The jealous key of Truth's eternal doors,
- 'If Bacon's eagle spirit had not leapt  
 Like lightning out of darkness—he compelled 270  
 The Proteus shape of Nature, as it slept
- 'To wake, and lead him to the caves that held  
 The treasure of the secrets of its reign.  
 See the great bards of elder time, who quelled
- 'The passions which they sung, as by their strain 275  
 May well be known: their living melody  
 Tempers its own contagion to the vein
- 'Of those who are infected with it—I  
 Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain!  
 And so my words have seeds of misery— 280
- 'Even as the deeds of others, not as theirs.'  
 And then he pointed to a company,
- 'Midst whom I quickly recognized the heirs  
 Of Caesar's crime, from him to Constantine;  
 The anarch chiefs, whose force and murderous snares 285

Had founded many a sceptre-bearing line,  
And spread the plague of gold and blood abroad:  
And Gregory and John, and men divine,

Who rose like shadows between man and God;  
Till that eclipse, still hanging over heaven, 290  
Was worshipped by the world o'er which they strode,

For the true sun it quenched—'Their power was given  
But to destroy,' replied the leader:—'I  
Am one of those who have created, even

'If it be but a world of agony.'— 295  
'Whence camest thou? and whither goest thou?  
How did thy course begin?' I said, 'and why?

'Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow  
Of people, and my heart sick of one sad thought—  
Speak!'—'Whence I am, I partly seem to know, 300

'And how and by what paths I have been brought  
To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess;—  
Why this should be, my mind can compass not;

'Whither the conqueror hurries me, still less;—  
But follow thou, and from spectator turn 305  
Actor or victim in this wretchedness,

'And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn  
From thee. Now listen:—In the April prime,  
When all the forest-tips began to burn

'With kindling green, touched by the azure clime 310  
Of the young season, I was laid asleep  
Under a mountain, which from unknown time

'Had yawned into a cavern, high and deep;  
And from it came a gentle rivulet,  
Whose water, like clear air, in its calm sweep 315

'Bent the soft grass, and kept for ever wet  
The stems of the sweet flowers, and filled the grove  
With sounds, which whoso hears must needs forget

'All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love,  
Which they had known before that hour of rest; 320  
A sleeping mother then would dream not of

'Her only child who died upon the breast  
At eventide—a king would mourn no more  
The crown of which his brows were dispossessed

- 'When the sun lingered o'er his ocean floor 325  
 To gild his rival's new prosperity.  
 Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore
- 'Ills, which if ill can find no cure from thee,  
 The thought of which no other sleep will quell,  
 Nor other music blot from memory, 330
- 'So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell;  
 And whether life had been before that sleep  
 The Heaven which I imagine, or a Hell
- 'Like this harsh world in which I wake to weep,  
 I know not. I arose, and for a space 335  
 The scene of woods and waters seemed to keep,
- 'Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace  
 Of light diviner than the common sun  
 Sheds on the common earth, and all the place
- 'Was filled with magic sounds woven into one 340  
 Oblivious melody, confusing sense  
 Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun;
- 'And, as I looked, the bright omnipresence  
 Of morning through the orient cavern flowed,  
 And the sun's image radiantly intense 345
- 'Burned on the waters of the well that glowed  
 Like gold, and threaded all the forest's maze  
 With winding paths of emerald fire; there stood
- 'Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze  
 Of his own glory, on the vibrating 350  
 Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,
- 'A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling  
 Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn,  
 And the invisible rain did ever sing
- 'A silver music on the mossy lawn; 355  
 And still before me on the dusky grass,  
 Iris her many-coloured scarf had drawn:
- 'In her right hand she bore a crystal glass,  
 Mantling with bright Nepenthe; the fierce splendour  
 Fell from her as she moved under the mass 360
- 'Of the deep cavern, and with palms so tender,  
 Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow,  
 Glided along the river, and did bend her

'Head under the dark boughs, till like a willow  
Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream 365  
That whispered with delight to be its pillow.

'As one enamoured is upborne in dream  
O'er lily-paven lakes, mid silver mist,  
To wondrous music, so this shape might seem

'Partly to tread the waves with feet which kissed 370  
The dancing foam; partly to glide along  
The air which roughened the moist amethyst,

'Or the faint morning beams that fell among  
The trees or the soft shadows of the trees;  
And her feet, ever to the ceaseless song 375

'Of leaves, and winds, and waves, and birds. and bees,  
And falling drops, moved in a measure new  
Yet sweet, as on the summer evening breeze,

'Up from the lake a shape of golden dew  
Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon, 380  
Dances i' the wind, where never eagle flew;

'And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune  
To which they moved, seemed as they moved to blot  
The thoughts of him who gazed on them; and soon

'All that was, seemed as if it had been not; 385  
And all the gazer's mind was strewn beneath  
Her feet like embers; and she, thought by thought,

'Trampled its sparks into the dust of death;  
As day upon the threshold of the east  
Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath 390

'Of darkness re-illumine even the least  
Of heaven's living eyes—like day she came,  
Making the night a dream; and ere she ceased

'To move, as one between desire and shame  
Suspended, I said—If, as it doth seem, 395  
Thou comest from the realm without a name

'Into this valley of perpetual dream,  
Show whence I came, and where I am, and why—  
Pass not away upon the passing stream.

'Arise and quench thy thirst, was her reply. 400  
And as a shut lily stricken by the wand  
Of dewy morning's vital alchemy,

'I rose; and, bending at her sweet command,  
 Touched with faint lips the cup she raised,  
 And suddenly my brain became as sand 405  
 'Where the first wave had more than half erased  
 The track of deer on desert Labrador;  
 Whilst the wolf, from which they fled amazed,  
 'Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore,  
 Until the second bursts;—so on my sight 410  
 Burst a new vision, never seen before,  
 'And the fair shape waned in the coming light,  
 As veil by veil the silent splendour drops  
 From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite  
 'Of sunrise, ere it tinge the mountain-tops; 415  
 And as the presence of that fairest planet,  
 Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes  
 'That his day's path may end as he began it,  
 In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent  
 Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it, 420  
 'Or the soft note in which his dear lament  
 The Brescian<sup>1</sup> shepherd breathes, or the caress  
 That turned his weary slumber to content;  
 'So knew I in that light's severe excess  
 The presence of that Shape which on the stream 425  
 Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,  
 'More dimly than a day-appearing dream,  
 The ghost of a forgotten form of sleep;  
 A light of heaven, whose half-extinguished beam  
 'Through the sick day in which we wake to weep 430  
 Glimmers, for ever sought, for ever lost;  
 So did that shape its obscure tenour keep  
 'Beside my path, as silent as a ghost;  
 But the new Vision, and the cold bright car,  
 With solemn speed and stunning music, crossed 435  
 'The forest, and as if from some dread war  
 Triumphantly returning, the loud million  
 Fiercely extolled the fortune of her star.  
 'A moving arch of victory, the vermilion  
 And green and azure plumes of Iris had 440  
 Built high over her wind-wingèd pavilion,

<sup>1</sup> The favourite song, *Stanco di pascolar le pecorelle*, is a Brescian national air.  
 —[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

'And underneath aethereal glory clad  
The wilderness, and far before her flew  
The tempest of the splendour, which forbade

'Shadow to fall from leaf and stone; the crew 445  
Seemed in that light, like atomies to dance  
Within a sunbeam;—some upon the new

'Embroidery of flowers, that did enhance  
The grassy vesture of the desert, played,  
Forgetful of the chariot's swift advance; 450

'Others stood gazing, till within the shade  
Of the great mountain its light left them dim;  
Others outspeeded it; and others made

'Circles around it, like the clouds that swim  
Round the high moon in a bright sea of air; 455  
And more did follow, with exulting hymn,

'The chariot and the captives fettered there:—  
But all like bubbles on an eddying flood  
Fell into the same track at last, and were

'Borne onward.—I among the multitude 460  
Was swept—me, sweetest flowers delayed not long;  
Me, not the shadow nor the solitude;

'Me, not that falling stream's Lethæan song;  
Me, not the phantom of that early Form  
Which moved upon its motion—but among 465

'The thickest billows of that living storm  
I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime  
Of that cold light, whose airs too soon deform.

'Before the chariot had begun to climb  
The opposing steep of that mysterious dell, 470  
Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

'Of him who from the lowest depths of hell,  
Through every paradise and through all glory,  
Love led serene, and who returned to tell

'The words of hate and awe; the wondrous story 475  
How all things are transfigured except Love;  
For deaf as is a sea, which wrath makes hoary,

'The world can hear not the sweet notes that move  
The sphere whose light is melody to lovers—  
A wonder worthy of his rhyme.—The grove 480

'Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers,  
The earth was gray with phantoms, and the air  
Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers

'A flock of vampire-bats before the glare  
Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening, 485  
Strange night upon some Indian isle;—thus were

'Phantoms diffused around; and some did fling  
Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,  
Behind them; some like eaglets on the wing

'Were lost in the white day; others like elves 490  
Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes  
Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves;

'And others sate chattering like restless apes  
On vulgar hands, . . .  
Some made a cradle of the ermined capes 495

'Of kingly mantles; some across the tiar  
Of pontiffs sate like vultures; others played  
Under the crown which girt with empire

'A baby's or an idiot's brow, and made  
Their nests in it. The old anatomies 500  
Sate hatching their bare broods under the shade

'Of daemon wings, and laughed from their dead eyes  
To reassume the delegated power,  
Arrayed in which those worms did monarchize,

'Who made this earth their charnel. Others more 505  
Humble, like falcons, sate upon the fist  
Of common men, and round their heads did soar;

'Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist  
On evening marshes, thronged about the brow  
Of lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist;— 510

'And others, like discoloured flakes of snow  
On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair,  
Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

'Which they extinguished; and, like tears, they were  
A veil to those from whose faint lids they rained 515  
In drops of sorrow. I became aware

'Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stained  
The track in which we moved. After brief space,  
From every form the beauty slowly waned;



'From every firmest limb and fairest face  
The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left  
The action and the shape without the grace

520

'Of life. The marble brow of youth was cleft  
With care; and in those eyes where once hope shone,  
Desire, like a lioness bereft

525

'Of her last cub, glared ere it died; each one  
Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly  
These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

'In autumn evening from a poplar tree.  
Each like himself and like each other were  
At first; but some distorted seemed to be

530

'Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air;  
And of this stuff the car's creative ray  
Wrought all the busy phantoms that were there,

'As the sun shapes the clouds; thus on the way  
Mask after mask fell from the countenance  
And form of all; and long before the day

535

'Was old, the joy which waked like heaven's glance  
The sleepers in the oblivious valley, died;  
And some grew weary of the ghastly dance,

540

'And fell, as I have fallen, by the wayside;—  
Those soonest from whose forms most shadows passed,  
And least of strength and beauty did abide.

'Then, what is life? I cried.'—

## EARLY POEMS [1814, 1815]

### STANZA, WRITTEN AT BRACKNELL

|                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| THY dewy looks sink in my breast; | I could have borne my wayward    |
| Thy gentle words stir poison      | lot:                             |
| there;                            | The chains that bind this ruined |
| Thou hast disturbed the only rest | soul                             |
| That was the portion of despair!  | Had cankered then—but crushed    |
| Subdued to Duty's hard control, 5 | it not.                          |

### STANZAS.—APRIL, 1814

AWAY! the moor is dark beneath the moon.  
Rapid clouds have drank the last pale beam of even:  
Away the gathering winds will call the darkness soon.  
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.

Pause not! the time is past! Every voice cries, Away! 5  
 Tempt not with one last tear thy friend's ungentle mood:  
 Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy stay:  
 Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away! to thy sad and silent home;  
 Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth; 10  
 Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,  
 And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.

The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine head:  
 The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet:  
 But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds the dead,  
 Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and peace may  
 meet.

The cloud shadows of midnight possess their own repose, 17  
 For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the deep:  
 Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows;  
 Whatever moves, or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed sleep. 20

Thou in the grave shalt rest—yet till the phantoms flee  
 Which that house and heath and garden made dear to thee erewhile,  
 Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings are not free  
 From the music of two voices and the light of one sweet smile.

### TO HARRIET

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| THY look of love has power to<br>calm<br>The stormiest passion of my<br>soul;<br>Thy gentle words are drops of<br>balm<br>In life's too bitter bowl;<br>No grief is mine, but that alone 5<br>These choicest blessings I have<br>known. | Then hear thy chosen own too late<br>His heart most worthy of thy hate.<br>Be thou, then, one among man-<br>kind<br>Whose heart is harder not for<br>state,<br>Thou only virtuous, gentle, kind, 15<br>Amid a world of hate;<br>And by a slight endurance seal<br>A fellow-being's lasting weal. |
| Harriet! if all who long to live<br>In the warm sunshine of thine<br>eye,<br>That price beyond all pain must<br>give,—<br>Beneath thy scorn to die; 10                                                                                  | For pale with anguish is his cheek,<br>His breath comes fast, his eyes<br>are dim, 20<br>Thy name is struggling ere he<br>speak,<br>Weak is each trembling limb;                                                                                                                                 |

In mercy let him not endure  
The misery of a fatal cure.

Oh, trust for once no erring  
guide! 25

Bid the remorseless feeling flee;  
'Tis malice, 'tis revenge, 'tis pride,  
'Tis anything but thee;  
Oh, deign a nobler pride to prove,  
And pity if thou canst not love. 30

## TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN

## I

MINE eyes were dim with tears un-  
shed;

Yes, I was firm—thus wert not  
thou;—

My baffled looks did fear yet  
dread

To meet thy looks—I could not  
know

How anxiously they sought to  
shine 5

With soothing pity upon mine.

## II

To slay and curb the soul's mute  
rage

Which preys upon itself alone;

To curse the life which is the cage

Of fettered grief that dares not  
groan, 10

Hiding from many a careless eye  
The scornèd load of agony.

## III

Whilst thou alone, then not re-  
garded,

The thou alone should be,  
To spend years thus, and be re-  
warded, 15

As thou, sweet love, requited me  
When none were near—Oh! I did  
wake

From torture for that moment's  
sake.

## IV

Upon my heart thy accents sweet  
Of peace and pity fell like dew 20  
On flowers half dead;—thy lips did  
meet

Mine tremblingly; thy dark eyes  
threw

Their soft persuasion on my brain,  
Charming away its dream of pain.

## V

We are not happy, sweet! our state  
Is strange and full of doubt and  
fear; 26

More need of words that ill  
abate;—

Reserve or censure come not  
near

Our sacred friendship, lest there be  
No solace left for thee and me. 30

## VI

Gentle and good and mild thou art,  
Nor can I live if thou appear  
Aught but thyself, or turn thine  
heart

Away from me, or stoop to wear  
The mask of scorn, although it  
be 35

To hide the love thou feel'st for me.

TO ———

YET look on me—take not thine eyes away,  
Which feed upon the love within mine own,  
Which is indeed but the reflected ray  
Of thine own beauty from my spirit thrown.

Yet speak to me—thy voice is as the tone 5  
 Of my heart's echo, and I think I hear  
 That thou yet lovest me; yet thou alone  
 Like one before a mirror, without care  
 Of aught but thine own features, imaged there;  
 And yet I wear out life in watching thee; 10  
 A toil so sweet at times, and thou indeed  
 Art kind when I am sick, and pity me.

## MUTABILITY

WE are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;  
 How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,  
 Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet soon  
 Night closes round, and they are lost for ever: )  
 Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings 5  
 Give various response to each varying blast,  
 To whose frail frame no second motion brings  
 One mood or modulation like the last.  
 We rest.—A dream has power to poison sleep;  
 We rise.—One wandering thought pollutes the day; 10  
 We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;  
 Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:  
 It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow,  
 The path of its departure still is free:  
 Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow; 15  
 Nought may endure but Mutability.

## ON DEATH

THERE IS NO WORK, NOR DEVICE, NOR KNOWLEDGE, NOR WISDOM, IN THE GRAVE,  
 WHITHER THOU GOEST.—*Ecclesiastes.*

THE pale, the cold, and the moony smile  
 Which the meteor beam of a starless night  
 Sheds on a lonely and sea-girt isle,  
 Ere the dawning of morn's undoubted light,  
 Is the flame of life so fickle and wan 5  
 That flits round our steps till their strength is gone.  
 O man! hold thee on in courage of soul  
 Through the stormy shades of thy worldly way,  
 And the billows of cloud that around thee roll  
 Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day, 10

Where Hell and Heaven shall leave thee free  
To the universe of destiny.

This world is the nurse of all we know,  
This world is the mother of all we feel,  
And the coming of death is a fearful blow 15  
To a brain unencompassed with nerves of steel;  
When all that we know, or feel, or see,  
Shall pass like an unreal mystery.

The secret things of the grave are there,  
Where all but this frame must surely be, 20  
Though the fine-wrought eye and the wondrous ear  
No longer will live to hear or to see  
All that is great and all that is strange  
In the boundless realm of unending change.

Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death? 25  
Who lifteth the veil of what is to come?  
Who painteth the shadows that are beneath  
The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb?  
Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be  
With the fears and the love for that which we see? 30

### A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD

LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

THE wind has swept from the wide atmosphere  
Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray;  
And pallid Evening twines its beaming hair  
In duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day:  
Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men, 5  
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,  
Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea;  
Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,  
Responding to the charm with its own mystery. 10  
The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass  
Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, æreal Pile! whose pinnacles  
Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,  
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells, 15  
Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,  
Around whose lessening and invisible height  
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres:  
And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound, 20  
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,  
Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around,  
And mingling with the still night and mute sky  
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild 25  
And terrorless as this serenest night:  
Here could I hope, like some inquiring child  
Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight  
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep  
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep. 30

TO ———

*ΔΑΚΡΥΣΙ ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ 'ΑΠΟΤΜΟΝ.*

OH! there are spirits of the air,  
And genii of the evening breeze,  
And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair  
As star-beams among twilight trees:—  
Such lovely ministers to meet 5  
Oft hast thou turned from men thy lonely feet.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs,  
And moonlight seas, that are the voice  
Of these inexplicable things,  
Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice 10  
When they did answer thee; but they  
Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes  
Beams that were never meant for thine,  
Another's wealth:—tame sacrifice 15  
To a fond faith! still dost thou pine?  
Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,  
Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands?

Ah! wherefore didst thou build thine hope  
On the false earth's inconstancy? 20  
Did thine own mind afford no scope  
Of love, or moving thoughts to thee?  
That natural scenes or human smiles  
Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles?

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled  
Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted; 25  
The glory of the moon is dead;  
Night's ghosts and dreams have now departed;

Thine own soul still is true to thee,  
But changed to a foul fiend through misery. 30

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever  
Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,  
Dream not to chase;—the mad endeavour  
Would scourge thee to severer pangs.  
Be as thou art. Thy settled fate, 35  
Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

TO WORDSWORTH

PoET of Nature, thou hast wept to know  
That things depart which never may return:  
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,  
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn. 5  
These common woes I feel. One loss is mine  
Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.  
Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine  
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:  
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood 10  
Above the blind and battling multitude:  
In honoured poverty thy voice did weave  
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—  
Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,  
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN ON THE FALL  
OF BONAPARTE

I HATED thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan  
To think that a most unambitious slave,  
Like thou, shouldst dance and revel on the grave  
Of Liberty. Thou mightst have built thy throne 5  
Where it had stood even now: thou didst prefer  
A frail and bloody pomp which Time has swept  
In fragments towards Oblivion. Massacre,  
For this I prayed, would on thy sleep have crept,  
Treason and Slavery, Rapine, Fear, and Lust,  
And stifled thee, their minister. I know 10  
Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,  
That Virtue owns a more eternal foe  
Than Force or Fraud: old Custom, legal Crime,  
And bloody Faith the foulest birth of Time.

## LINES

## I

THE cold earth slept below,  
 Above the cold sky shone;  
 And all around, with a chilling  
 sound,  
 From caves of ice and fields of  
 snow,  
 The breath of night like death  
 did flow 5  
 Beneath the sinking moon.

## II

The wintry hedge was black,  
 The green grass was not seen,  
 The birds did rest on the bare  
 thorn's breast,  
 Whose roots, beside the pathway  
 track, 10  
 Had bound their folds o'er many  
 a crack  
 Which the frost had made be-  
 tween.

## III

Thine eyes glowed in the glare  
 Of the moon's dying light;  
 As a fen-fire's beam on a sluggish  
 stream 15  
 Gleams dimly, so the moon shone  
 there,  
 And it yellowed the strings of thy  
 raven hair,  
 That shook in the wind of  
 night.

## IV

The moon made thy lips pale,  
 beloved—  
 The wind made thy bosom  
 chill—  
 The night did shed on thy dear  
 head 21  
 Its frozen dew, and thou didst  
 lie  
 Where the bitter breath of the  
 naked sky  
 Might visit thee at will.



## NOTE ON THE EARLY POEMS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

THE remainder of Shelley's Poems will be arranged in the order in which they were written. Of course, mistakes will occur in placing some of the shorter ones; for, as I have said, many of these were thrown aside, and I never saw them till I had the misery of looking over his writings after the hand that traced them was dust; and some were in the hands of others, and I never saw them till now. The subjects of the poems are often to me an unerring guide; but on other occasions I can only guess, by finding them in the pages of the same manuscript book that contains poems with the date of whose composition I am fully conversant. In the present arrangement all his poetical translations will be placed together at the end.

The loss of his early papers prevents my being able to give any of the poetry of his boyhood. Of the few I give as *Early Poems*, the greater part were published with *Alastor*; some of them were written previously, some at the same period. The poem beginning 'Oh, there are spirits in the air' was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew; and at whose character he could only guess imperfectly, through his writings, and accounts he heard of him from some who knew him well. He regarded his change of opinions as rather an act of will than conviction, and believed that in his inner heart he would be haunted by what Shelley considered the better and holier aspirations of his youth. The summer evening that suggested to him the poem written in the churchyard of Lechlade occurred during his voyage up the Thames in 1815. He had been advised by a physician to live as much as possible in the open air; and a fortnight of a bright warm July was spent in tracing the Thames to its source. He never spent a season more tranquilly than the summer of 1815. He had just recovered from a severe pulmonary attack; the weather was warm and pleasant. He lived near Windsor Forest; and his life was spent under its shade or on the water, meditating subjects for verse. Hitherto, he had chiefly aimed at extending his political doctrines, and attempted so to do by appeals in prose essays to the people, exhorting them to claim their rights; but he had now begun to feel that the time for action was not ripe in England, and that the pen was the only instrument wherewith to prepare the way for better things.

In the scanty journals kept during those years I find a record of the books that Shelley read during several years. During the years of 1814 and 1815 the list is extensive. It includes, in Greek, Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus, the histories of Thucydides and Herodotus, and Diogenes Laertius. In Latin, Petronius, Suetonius, some of the works of Cicero, a large proportion of those of Seneca and Livy. In English, Milton's poems, Wordsworth's *Excursion*, Southey's *Madoc* and *Thalaba*, Locke *On the Human Understanding*, Bacon's *Novum Organum*. In Italian, Ariosto, Tasso, and Alfieri. In French, the *Réveries d'un Solitaire* of Rousseau. To these may be added several modern books of travel. He read few novels.

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1816

## THE SUNSET

THERE late was One whose subtle being,  
 As light and wind within some delicate cloud  
 That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,  
 Genius and death contended. None may know  
 The sweetness of the joy which made his breath 5  
 Fail, like the trances of the summer air,  
 When, with the Lady of his love, who then  
 First knew the unreserve of mingled being,  
 He walked along the pathway of a field  
 Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er, 10  
 But to the west was open to the sky.  
 There now the sun had sunk, but lines of gold  
 Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points  
 Of the far level grass and nodding flowers  
 And the old dandelion's hoary beard, 15  
 And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay  
 On the brown massy woods—and in the east  
 The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose  
 Between the black trunks of the crowded trees,  
 While the faint stars were gathering overhead.— 20  
 'Is it not strange, Isabel,' said the youth,  
 'I never saw the sun? We will walk here  
 To-morrow; thou shalt look on it with me.'

That night the youth and lady mingled lay  
 In love and sleep—but when the morning came 25  
 The lady found her lover dead and cold.  
 Let none believe that God in mercy gave  
 That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,  
 But year by year lived on—in truth I think  
 Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles, 30  
 And that she did not die, but lived to tend  
 Her aged father, were a kind of madness,  
 If madness 'tis to be unlike the world.  
 For but to see her were to read the tale  
 Woven by some subtlest bard, to make hard hearts 35  
 Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief;—  
 Her eyes were black and lustreless and wan:  
 Her eyelashes were worn away with tears,  
 Her lips and cheeks were like things dead—so pale;  
 Her hands were thin, and through their wandering veins 40  
 And weak articulations might be seen

Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self  
Which one vexed ghost inhabits, night and day,  
Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee!

'Inheritor of more than earth can give,  
Passionless calm and silence unproved,  
Whether the dead find, oh, not sleep! but rest,  
And are the uncomplaining things they seem,  
Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love;  
Oh, that like thine, mine epitaph were—Peace!' 45  
This was the only moan she ever made. 50

## HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

## I

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power  
Floats though unseen among us,—visiting  
This various world with as inconstant wing  
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,—  
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower, 5  
It visits with inconstant glance  
Each human heart and countenance;  
Like hues and harmonies of evening,—  
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—  
Like memory of music fled,— 10  
Like aught that for its grace may be  
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

## II

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate  
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon  
Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone? 15  
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,  
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?  
Ask why the sunlight not for ever  
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain-river,  
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown, 20  
Why fear and dream and death and birth  
Cast on the daylight of this earth  
Such gloom,—why man has such a scope  
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

## III

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever 25  
To sage or poet these responses given—  
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,  
Remain the records of their vain endeavour,

Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,  
 From all we hear and all we see, 30  
 Doubt, chance, and mutability.  
 Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,  
 Or music by the night-wind sent  
 Through strings of some still instrument,  
 Or moonlight on a midnight stream, 35  
 Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

## IV

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart  
 And come, for some uncertain moments lent.  
 Man were immortal, and omnipotent, 40  
 Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,  
 Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.  
 Thou messenger of sympathies,  
 That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—  
 Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,  
 Like darkness to a dying flame! 45  
 Depart not as thy shadow came,  
 Depart not—lest the grave should be,  
 Like life and fear, a dark reality.

## V

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped  
 Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin, 50  
 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing  
 Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.  
 I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed;  
 I was not heard—I saw them not—  
 When musing deeply on the lot 55  
 Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing  
 All vital things that wake to bring  
 News of birds and blossoming,—  
 Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;  
 I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy! 60

## VI

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers  
 To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow?  
 With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now  
 I call the phantoms of a thousand hours  
 Each from his voiceless grave: they have in visioned bowers 65  
 Of studious zeal or love's delight  
 Outwatched with me the envious night—  
 They know that never joy illumed my brow

Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free  
 This world from its dark slavery, 70  
 That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,  
 Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

VII

The day becomes more solemn and serene  
 When noon is past—there is a harmony  
 In autumn, and a lustre in its sky, 75  
 Which through the summer is not heard or seen,  
 As if it could not be, as if it had not been!  
 Thus let thy power, which like the truth  
 Of nature on my passive youth  
 Descended, to my onward life supply 80  
 Its calm—to one who worships thee,  
 And every form containing thee,  
 Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind  
 To fear himself, and love all human kind.

MONT BLANC

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

I

THE everlasting universe of things  
 Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,  
 Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—  
 Now lending splendour, where from secret springs  
 The source of human thought its tribute brings 5  
 Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,  
 Such as a feeble brook will oft assume  
 In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,  
 Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,  
 Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river 10  
 Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—  
 Thou many-coloured, many-voicèd vale,  
 Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail  
 Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene, 15  
 Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down  
 From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,  
 Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame  
 Of lightning through the tempest;—thou dost lie,  
 Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging, 20

Children of elder time, in whose devotion  
 The chainless winds still come and ever came  
 To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging  
 To hear—an old and solemn harmony;  
 Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep 25  
 Of the aethereal waterfall, whose veil  
 Robes some unsculptured image; the strange sleep  
 Which when the voices of the desert fail  
 Wraps all in its own deep eternity;—  
 Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion, 30  
 A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame;  
 Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,  
 Thou art the path of that unresting sound—  
 Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee  
 I seem as in a trance sublime and strange 35  
 To muse on my own separate fantasy,  
 My own, my human mind, which passively  
 Now renders and receives fast influencings,  
 Holding an unremitting interchange  
 With the clear universe of things around; 40  
 One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings  
 Now float above thy darkness, and now rest  
 Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,  
 In the still cave of the witch Poesy,  
 Seeking among the shadows that pass by 45  
 Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,  
 Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast  
 From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!

## III

Some say that gleams of a remoter world  
 Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber, 50  
 And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber  
 Of those who wake and live.—I look on high;  
 Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled  
 The veil of life and death? or do I lie  
 In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep 55  
 Spread far around and inaccessibly  
 Its circles? For the very spirit fails,  
 Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep  
 That vanishes among the viewless gales!  
 Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky, 60  
 Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—  
 Its subject mountains their unearthly forms  
 Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between  
 Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,  
 Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread 65

And wind among the accumulated steepes;  
 A desert peopled by the storms alone,  
 Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,  
 And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously  
 Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high, 71  
 Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene  
 Where the old Earthquake-daemon taught her young  
 Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea  
 Of fire envelop once this silent snow?  
 None can reply—all seems eternal now. 75  
 The wilderness has a mysterious tongue  
 Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,  
 So solemn, so serene, that man may be,  
 But for such faith, with nature reconciled;  
 Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal 80  
 Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood  
 By all, but which the wise, and great, and good  
 Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,  
 Ocean, and all the living things that dwell 85  
 Within the daedal earth; lightning, and rain,  
 Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,  
 The torpor of the year when feeble dreams  
 Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep  
 Holds every future leaf and flower;—the bound 90  
 With which from that detested trance they leap;  
 The works and ways of man, their death and birth,  
 And that of him and all that his may be;  
 All things that move and breathe with toil and sound  
 Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell. 95  
 Power dwells apart in 'ts tranquillity,  
 Remote, serene, and inaccessible:  
 And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,  
 On which I gaze, even these primaeval mountains  
 Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep 100  
 Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,  
 Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice,  
 Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power  
 Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,  
 A city of death, distinct with many a tower 105  
 And wall impregnable of beaming ice.  
 Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin  
 Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky  
 Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing  
 Its destined path, or in the mangled soil 110

Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down  
 From yon remotest waste, have overthrown  
 The limits of the dead and living world,  
 Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place  
 Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil 115  
 Their food and their retreat for ever gone,  
 So much of life and joy is lost. The race  
 Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling  
 Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,  
 And their place is not known. Below, vast caves 120  
 Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,  
 Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling  
 Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,  
 The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever  
 Rolls its loud waters to the ocean-waves, 125  
 Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

## V

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:—the power is there,  
 The still and solemn power of many sights,  
 And many sounds, and much of life and death. 130  
 In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,  
 In the lone glare of day, the snows descend  
 Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,  
 Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,  
 Or the star-beams dart through them:—Winds contend  
 Silently there, and heap the snow with breath 135  
 Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home  
 The voiceless lightning in these solitudes  
 Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods  
 Over the snow. The secret Strength of things  
 Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome 140  
 Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!  
 And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,  
 If to the human mind's imaginings  
 Silence and solitude were vacancy?

*July 23, 1816.*

## FRAGMENT: HOME

DEAR home, thou scene of earliest hopes and joys,  
 The least of which wronged Memory ever makes  
 Bitterer than all thine unremembered tears.



## FRAGMENT OF A GHOST STORY

A SHOVEL of his ashes took  
 From the hearth's obscurest nook,  
 Muttering mysteries as she went.  
 Helen and Henry knew that Granny  
 Was as much afraid of Ghosts as any,  
 And so they followed hard—  
 But Helen clung to her brother's arm,  
 And her own spasm made her shake.

5

## NOTE ON POEMS OF 1816, BY MRS. SHELLEY

SHELLEY wrote little during this year. The poem entitled *The Sunset* was written in the spring of the year, while still residing at Bishopsgate. He spent the summer on the shores of the Lake of Geneva. The *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* was conceived during his voyage round the lake with Lord Byron. He occupied himself during this voyage by reading the *Nouvelle Héloïse* for the first time. The reading it on the very spot where the scenes are laid added to the interest; and he was at once surprised and charmed by the passionate eloquence and earnest entralling interest that pervade this work. There was something in the character of Saint-Preux, in his abnegation of self, and in the worship he paid to Love, that coincided with Shelley's own disposition; and, though differing in many of the views and shocked by others, yet the effect of the whole was fascinating and delightful.

*Mont Blanc* was inspired by a view of that mountain and its surrounding peaks and valleys, as he lingered on the Bridge of Arve on his way through the Valley of Chamouni. Shelley makes the following mention of this poem in his publication of the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour, and Letters from Switzerland*: 'The poem entitled *Mont Blanc* is written by the author of the two letters from Chamouni and Vevai. It was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe; and, as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untamable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those feelings sprang.'

This was an eventful year, and less time was given to study than usual. In the list of his reading I find, in Greek, Theocritus, the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, several of Plutarch's *Lives*, and the works of Lucian. In Latin, Lucretius, Pliny's *Letters*, the *Annals* and *Germany* of Tacitus. In French, the *History of the French Revolution* by Lacretelle. He read for the first time, this year, Montaigne's *Essays*, and regarded them ever after as one of the most delightful and instructive books in the world. The list is scanty in English works: Locke's *Essay*, *Political Justice*, and Coleridge's *Lay Sermon*, form nearly the whole. It was his frequent habit to read aloud to me in the evening; in this way we read, this year, the New Testament, *Paradise Lost*, Spenser's *Faery Queen*, and *Don Quixote*.

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1817

## MARIANNE'S DREAM

## I

A PALE Dream came to a Lady fair,  
 And said, A boon, a boon, I pray!  
 I know the secrets of the air,  
 And things are lost in the glare  
 of day,  
 Which I can make the sleeping  
 see, 5  
 If they will put their trust in me.

## II

And thou shalt know of things un-  
 known,  
 If thou wilt let me rest between  
 The veiny lids, whose fringe is  
 thrown  
 Over thine eyes so dark and  
 sheen: 10  
 And half in hope, and half in fright,  
 The Lady closed her eyes so bright.

## III

At first all deadly shapes were  
 driven  
 Tumultuously across her sleep,  
 And o'er the vast cope of bending  
 heaven 15  
 All ghastly-visaged clouds did  
 sweep;  
 And the Lady ever looked to spy  
 If the golden sun shone forth on  
 high.

## IV

And as towards the east she turned,  
 She saw aloft in the morning air,  
 Which now with hues of sunrise  
 burned, 21  
 A great black Anchor rising  
 there;

And wherever the Lady turned her  
 eyes,  
 It hung before her in the skies.

## V

The sky was blue as the summer  
 sea,  
 The depths were cloudless over-  
 head, 26  
 The air was calm as it could be,  
 There was no sight or sound of  
 dread,  
 But that black Anchor floating still  
 Over the piny eastern hill. 30

## VI

The Lady grew sick with a weight  
 of fear  
 To see that Anchor ever hanging,  
 And veiled her eyes; she then did  
 hear  
 The sound as of a dim low clang-  
 ing,  
 And looked abroad if she might  
 know 35  
 Was it aught else, or but the flow  
 Of the blood in her own veins, to  
 and fro.

## VII

There was a mist in the sunless air,  
 Which shook as it were with an  
 earthquake's shock,  
 But the very weeds that blossomed  
 there 40  
 Were moveless, and each mighty  
 rock  
 Stood on its basis steadfastly;  
 The Anchor was seen no more on  
 high.

## VIII

But piled around, with summits  
hid

In lines of cloud at intervals, 45  
Stood many a mountain pyramid  
Among whose everlasting walls  
Two mighty cities shone, and ever  
Through the red mist their domes  
did quiver.

## IX

On two dread mountains, from  
whose crest, 50

Might seem, the eagle, for her  
brood,  
Would ne'er have hung her dizzy  
nest,

Those tower-encircled cities  
stood.

A vision strange such towers to see,  
Sculptured and wrought so gor-  
geously 55

Where human art could never be.

## X

And columns framed of marble  
white,

And giant fanes, dome over dome  
Piled, and triumphant gates, all  
bright

With workmanship, which could  
not come 60

From touch of mortal instrument,  
Shot o'er the vales, or lustre lent  
From its own shapes magnificent.

## XI

But still the Lady heard that clang  
Filling the wide air far away; 65  
And still the mist whose light did  
hang

Among the mountains shook  
always,  
So that the Lady's heart beat fast,  
As half in joy, and half aghast,  
On those high domes her look she  
cast. 70

## XII

Sudden, from out that city sprung  
A light that made the earth grow  
red;

Two flames that each with quiver-  
ing tongue

Licked its high domes, and over-  
head

Among those mighty towers and  
fanés 75

Dropped fire, as a volcano rains  
Its sulphurous ruin on the plains.

## XIII

And hark! a rush as if the deep  
Had burst its bonds; she looked  
behind

And saw over the western steep 80  
A raging flood descend, and wind  
Through that wide vale; she felt  
no fear,

But said within herself, 'Tis clear  
These towers are Nature's own, and  
she 84

To save them has sent forth the  
sea.

## XIV

And now those raging billows came  
Where that fair Lady sate, and  
she

Was borne towards the showering  
flame

By the wild waves heaped tumult-  
uously,

And, on a little plank, the flow 90  
Of the whirlpool bore her to and  
fro.

## XV

The flames were fiercely vomited  
From every tower and every  
dome,

And dreary light did widely shed  
O'er that vast flood's suspended  
foam, 95

Beneath the smoke which hung its  
night  
On the stained cope of heaven's  
light.

## XVI

The plank whereon that Lady sate  
Was driven through the chasms,  
about and about,  
Between the peaks so desolate 100  
Of the drowning mountains, in  
and out,  
As the thistle-beard on a whirlwind  
sails—  
While the flood was filling those  
hollow vales.

## XVII

At last her plank an eddy crossed,  
And bore her to the city's wall,  
Which now the flood had reached  
almost; 106  
It might the stoutest heart appal  
To hear the fire roar and hiss  
Through the domes of those mighty  
palaces.

## XVIII

The eddy whirled her round and  
round 110  
Before a gorgeous gate, which  
stood  
Piercing the clouds of smoke which  
bound  
Its æry arch with light like  
blood;  
She looked on that gate of marble  
clear,  
With wonder that extinguished  
fear.

## XIX

For it was filled with sculptures  
rarest, 116  
Of forms most beautiful and  
strange,  
Like nothing human, but the fairest

Of wingèd shapes, whose legions  
range  
Throughout the sleep of those that  
are, 120  
Like this same Lady, good and fair.

## XX

And as she looked, still lovelier  
grew  
Those marble forms;—the sculp-  
tor sure  
Was a strong spirit, and the hue  
Of his own mind did there en-  
dure  
After the touch, whose power had  
braided 126  
Such grace, was in some sad change  
faded.

## XXI

She looked, the flames were dim,  
the flood  
Grew tranquil as a woodland  
river  
Winding through hills in solitude;  
Those marble shapes then seemed  
to quiver, 131  
And their fair limbs to float in  
motion,  
Like weeds unfolding in the ocean.

## XXII

And their lips moved; one seemed  
to speak,  
When suddenly the mountains  
cracked, 135  
And through the chasm the flood  
did break  
With an earth-uplifting cataract:  
The statues gave a joyous scream,  
And on its wings the pale thin  
Dream  
Lifted the Lady from the stream.

## XXIII

The dizzy flight of that phantom  
pale 141

|                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                       |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Waked the fair Lady from her<br>sleep,<br>And she arose, while from the veil<br>Of her dark eyes the Dream did<br>creep, | And she walked about as one who<br>knew<br>That sleep has sights as clear and<br>true<br>As any waking eyes can view. | 145 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|

## TO CONSTANTIA, SINGING

## I

THUS to be lost and thus to sink and die,  
 Perchance were death indeed!—Constantia, turn!  
 In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie,  
 Even though the sounds which were thy voice, which burn  
 Between thy lips, are laid to sleep; 5  
 Within thy breath, and on thy hair, like odour, it is yet,  
 And from thy touch like fire doth leap.  
 Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet,  
 Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but not forget!

## II

A breathless awe, like the swift change 16  
 Unseen, but felt in youthful slumbers,  
 Wild, sweet, but uncommunicably strange,  
 Thou breakest now in fast ascending numbers.  
 The cope of heaven seems rent and cloven  
 By the enchantment of thy strain, 15  
 And on my shoulders wings are woven,  
 To follow its sublime career  
 Beyond the mighty moons that wane  
 Upon the verge of Nature's utmost sphere,  
 Till the world's shadowy walls are past and disappear. 20

## III

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers  
 O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings,  
 The blood and life within those snowy fingers  
 Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.  
 My brain is wild, my breath comes quick— 25  
 The blood is listening in my frame,  
 And thronging shadows, fast and thick,  
 Fall on my overflowing eyes;  
 My heart is quivering like a flame;  
 As morning dew, that in the sunbeam dies, 30  
 I am dissolved in these consuming ecstasies.

## IV

I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee,  
 Whilst, like the world-surrounding air, thy song  
 Flows on, and fills all things with melody.—  
 Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong, 35  
 On which, like one in trance upborne,  
 Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,  
 Rejoicing like a cloud of morn.  
 Now 'tis the breath of summer night,  
 Which when the starry waters sleep,  
 Round western isles, with incense-blossoms bright, 40  
 Lingering, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.

## TO CONSTANTIA

## I

THE rose that drinks the fountain dew  
 In the pleasant air of noon,  
 Grows pale and blue with altered hue—  
 In the gaze of the nightly moon;  
 For the planet of frost, so cold and bright, 5  
 Makes it wan with her borrowed light.

## II

Such is my heart—roses are fair,  
 And that at best a withered blossom;  
 But thy false care did idly wear  
 Its withered leaves in a faithless bosom; 10  
 And fed with love, like air and dew,  
 Its growth——

## FRAGMENT: TO ONE SINGING

MY spirit like a charmed bark doth swim  
 Upon the liquid waves of thy sweet singing,  
 Far far away into the regions dim  
 Of rapture—as a boat, with swift sails winging  
 Its way adown some many-winding river, 5  
 Speeds through dark forests o'er the waters swinging . . .

## A FRAGMENT: TO MUSIC

SILVER key of the fountain of tears,  
 Where the spirit drinks till the brain is wild;  
 Softest grave of a thousand fears,  
 Where their mother, Care, like a drowsy child,  
 Is laid asleep in flowers. 5

ANOTHER FRAGMENT TO MUSIC

No, Music, thou art not the 'food of Love,'  
Unless Love feeds upon its own sweet self,  
Till it becomes all Music murmurs of.

'MIGHTY EAGLE'

SUPPOSED TO BE ADDRESSED TO WILLIAM GODWIN

MIGHTY eagle! thou that soarest  
O'er the misty mountain forest,  
And amid the light of morning  
Like a cloud of glory hiest,  
And when night descends defiest  
The embattled tempests' warning!

5

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR

I

THY country's curse is on thee, darkest crest  
Of that foul, knotted, many-headed worm  
Which rends our Mother's bosom—Priestly Pest!  
Masked Resurrection of a buried Form!

II

Thy country's curse is on thee! Justice sold,  
Truth trampled, Nature's landmarks overthrown,  
And heaps of fraud-accumulated gold,  
Plead, loud as thunder, at Destruction's throne.

5

III

And, whilst that sure slow Angel which aye stands  
Watching the beck of Mutability  
Delays to execute her high commands,  
And, though a nation weeps, spares thine and thee.

10

IV

Oh, let a father's curse be on thy soul,  
And let a daughter's hope be on thy tomb;  
Be both, on thy gray head, a leaden cowl  
To weigh thee down to thine approaching doom!

15

V

I curse thee by a parent's outraged love,  
By hopes long cherished and too lately lost,  
By gentle feelings thou couldst never prove,  
By griefs which thy stern nature never crossed;

20

## VI

By those infantine smiles of happy light,  
 Which were a fire within a stranger's hearth,  
 Quenched even when kindled, in untimely night  
 Hiding the promise of a lovely birth:

## VII

By those unpractised accents of young speech, 25  
 Which he who is a father thought to frame  
 To gentlest lore, such as the wisest teach—  
*Thou* strike the lyre of mind!—oh, grief and shame!

## VIII

By all the happy see in children's growth—  
 That undeveloped flower of budding years— 30  
 Sweetness and sadness interwoven both,  
 Source of the sweetest hopes and saddest fears—

## IX

By all the days, under an hireling's care,  
 Of dull constraint and bitter heaviness,—  
 O wretched ye if ever any were,— 35  
 Sadder than orphans, yet not fatherless!

## X

By the false cant which on their innocent lips  
 Must hang like poison on an opening bloom,  
 By the dark creeds which cover with eclipse  
 Their pathway from the cradle to the tomb— 40

## XI

By thy most impious Hell, and all its terror;  
 By all the grief, the madness, and the guilt  
 Of thine impostures, which must be their error—  
 That sand on which thy crumbling power is built—

## XII

By thy complicity with lust and hate— 45  
 Thy thirst for tears—thy hunger after gold—  
 The ready frauds which ever on thee wait—  
 The servile arts in which thou hast grown old—

## XIII

By thy most killing sneer, and by thy smile—  
 By all the arts and snares of thy black den, 50  
 And—for thou canst outweep the crocodile—  
 By thy false tears—those millstones braining men—



## XIV

By all the hate which checks a father's love—  
 By all the scorn which kills a father's care—  
 By those most impious hands which dared remove 55  
 Nature's high bounds—by thee—and by despair—

## XV

Yes, the despair which bids a father groan,  
 And cry, 'My children are no longer mine—  
 The blood within those veins may be mine own,  
 But—Tyrant—their polluted souls are thine;'— 60

## XVI

I curse thee—though I hate thee not.—O slave!  
 If thou couldst quench the earth-consuming Hell  
 Of which thou art a daemon, on thy grave  
 This curse should be a blessing. Fare thee well!

## TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

## I

THE billows on the beach are leaping around it,  
 The bark is weak and frail,  
 The sea looks black, and the clouds that bound it  
 Darkly strew the gale.  
 Come with me, thou delightful child, 5  
 Come with me, though the wave is wild,  
 And the winds are loose, we must not stay,  
 Or the slaves of the law may rend thee away.

## II

They have taken thy brother and sister dear,  
 They have made them unfit for thee; 10  
 They have withered the smile and dried the tear  
 Which should have been sacred to me.  
 To a blighting faith and a cause of crime  
 They have bound them slaves in youthly prime,  
 And they will curse my name and thee 15  
 Because we fearless are and free.

## III

Come thou, belovèd as thou art;  
 Another sleepeth still  
 Near thy sweet mother's anxious heart,  
 Which thou with joy shalt fill. 20

## S H E L L E Y

With fairest smiles of wonder thrown  
 On that which is indeed our own,  
 And which in distant lands will be  
 The dearest playmate unto thee.

## IV

Fear not the tyrants will rule for ever, 25  
 Or the priests of the evil faith;  
 They stand on the brink of that raging river,  
 Whose waves they have tainted with death.  
 It is fed from the depth of a thousand dells,  
 Around them it foams and rages and swells; 30  
 And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,  
 Like wrecks on the surge of eternity.

## V

Rest, rest, and shriek not, thou gentle child!  
 The rocking of the boat thou fearest,  
 And the cold spray and the clamour wild?— 35  
 There, sit between us two, thou dearest—  
 Me and thy mother—well we know  
 The storm at which thou tremblest so,  
 With all its dark and hungry graves,  
 Less cruel than the savage slaves 40  
 Who hunt us o'er these sheltering waves.

## VI

This hour will in thy memory  
 Be a dream of days forgotten long.  
 We soon shall dwell by the azure sea  
 Of serene and golden Italy, 45  
 Or Greece, the Mother of the free;  
 And I will teach thine infant tongue  
 To call upon those heroes old  
 In their own language, and will mould  
 Thy growing spirit in the flame  
 Of Grecian lore, that by such name 50  
 A patriot's birthright thou mayst claim!

FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAFT OF THE POEM  
 TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

## I

THE world is now our dwelling-place;  
 Where'er the earth one fading trace  
 Of what was great and free does keep,  
 That is our home! . . .

Mild thoughts of man's ungentle race 5  
 Shall our contented exile reap;  
 For who that in some happy place  
 His own free thoughts can freely chase  
 By woods and waves can clothe his face  
 In cynic smiles? Child! we shall weep. 10

## II

This lament,  
 The memory of thy grievous wrong  
 Will fade . . .  
 But genius is omnipotent  
 To hallow . . .

## ON FANNY GODWIN

HER voice did quiver as we parted,  
 Yet knew I not that heart was broken  
 From which it came, and I departed  
 Heeding not the words then spoken.  
 Misery—O Misery, 5  
 This world is all too wide for thee.

## LINES

## I

THAT time is dead for ever,  
 child!  
 Drowned, frozen, dead for ever!  
 We look on the past  
 And stare aghast  
 At the spectres wailing, pale and 5  
 ghastr,  
 Of hopes which thou and I be-  
 guiled  
 To death on life's dark river.

## II

The stream we gazed on then rolled  
 by;  
 Its waves are unreturning;  
 But we yet stand 10  
 In a lone land,  
 Like tombs to mark the memory  
 Of hopes and fears, which fade and  
 flee  
 In the light of life's dim morn-  
 ing.

## DEATH

## I

THEY die—the dead return not—Misery  
 Sits near an open grave and calls them over,  
 A Youth with hoary hair and haggard eye—  
 They are the names of kindred, friend and lover,  
 Which he so feebly calls—they all are gone—  
 Fond wretch, all dead! those vacant names alone,  
 This most familiar scene, my pain—  
 These tombs—alone remain.

## II

Misery, my sweetest friend—oh, weep no more!  
 Thou wilt not be consoled—I wonder not! 10  
 For I have seen thee from thy dwelling's door  
 Watch the calm sunset with them, and this spot  
 Was even as bright and calm, but transitory,  
 And now thy hopes are gone, thy hair is hoary;  
 This most familiar scene, my pain— 15  
 These tombs—alone remain.

## OTHO

## I

THOU wert not, Cassius, and thou couldst not be,  
 Last of the Romans, though thy memory claim  
 From Brutus his own glory—and on thee  
 Rests the full splendour of his sacred fame:  
 Nor he who dared make the foul tyrant quail 5  
 Amid his cowering senate with thy name,  
 Though thou and he were great—it will avail  
 To thine own fame that Otho's should not fail.

## II

'Twill wrong thee not—thou wouldst, if thou couldst feel,  
 Abjure such envious fame—great Otho died 10  
 Like thee—he sanctified his country's steel,  
 At once the tyrant and tyrannicide,  
 In his own blood—a deed it was to bring  
 Tears from all men—though full of gentle pride,  
 Such pride as from impetuous love may spring, 15  
 That will not be refused its offering.

## FRAGMENTS SUPPOSED TO BE PARTS OF OTHO

## I

THOSE whom nor power, nor lying faith, nor toil,  
 Nor custom, queen of many slaves, makes blind,  
 Have ever grieved that man should be the spoil  
 Of his own weakness, and with earnest mind  
 Fed hopes of its redemption; these recur 5  
 Chastened by deathful victory now, and find  
 Foundations in this foulest age, and stir  
 Me whom they cheer to be their minister.

## II

Dark is the realm of grief: but human things  
 Those may not know who cannot weep for them. 10

## III

Once more descend  
 The shadows of my soul upon mankind,  
 For to those hearts with which they never blend,  
 Thoughts are but shadows which the flashing mind  
 From the swift clouds which track its flight of fire,  
 Casts on the gloomy world it leaves behind. 15

## ‘O THAT A CHARIOT OF CLOUD WERE MINE’

O THAT a chariot of cloud were mine!  
 Of cloud which the wild tempest weaves in air,  
 When the moon over the ocean’s line  
 Is spreading the locks of her bright gray hair.  
 O that a chariot of cloud were mine! 5  
 I would sail on the waves of the billowy wind  
 To the mountain peak and the rocky lake,  
 And the . . .

## FRAGMENT: TO A FRIEND RELEASED FROM PRISON

For me, my friend, if not that tears did tremble  
 In my faint eyes, and that my heart beat fast  
 With feelings which make rapture pain resemble,  
 Yet, from thy voice that falsehood starts aghast,  
 I thank thee—let the tyrant keep 5  
 His chains and tears, yea, let him weep  
 With rage to see thee freshly risen,  
 Like strength from slumber, from the prison,  
 In which he vainly hoped the soul to bind  
 Which on the chains must prey that fetter humankind. 10

## FRAGMENT: SATAN BROKEN LOOSE

A GOLDEN-WINGED Angel stood  
 Before the Eternal Judgement-seat:  
 His looks were wild, and Devil’s blood  
 Stained his dainty hands and feet.  
 The Father and the Son 5  
 Knew that strife was now begun.  
 They knew that Satan had broken his chain,  
 And with millions of daemons in his train,  
 Was ranging over the world again.  
 Before the Angel had told his tale, 10  
 A sweet and a creeping sound  
 Like the rushing of wings was heard around;

And suddenly the lamps grew pale—  
The lamps, before the Archangels seven,  
That burn continually in Heaven.

15

FRAGMENT: *IGNICULUS DESIDERII*

To thirst and find no fill—to wail and wander  
With short unsteady steps—to pause and ponder—  
To feel the blood run through the veins and tingle  
Where busy thought and blind sensation mingle;  
To nurse the image of unfelt caresses  
Till dim imagination just possesses  
The half-created shadow, then all the night  
Sick . . .

5

FRAGMENT: *AMOR AETERNUS*

WEALTH and dominion fade into the mass  
Of the great sea of human right and wrong,  
When once from our possession they must pass;  
But love, though misdirected, is among  
The things which are immortal, and surpass  
All that frail stuff which will be—or which was.

5

FRAGMENT: THOUGHTS COME AND GO IN  
SOLITUDE

My thoughts arise and fade in solitude,  
The verse that would invest them melts away  
Like moonlight in the heaven of spreading day:  
How beautiful they were, how firm they stood,  
Flecking the starry sky like woven pearl!

5

## A HATE-SONG

A HATER he came and sat by a ditch,  
And he took an old cracked lute;  
And he sang a song that was more of a screech  
'Gainst a woman that was a brute.

## LINES TO A CRITIC

I

HONEY from silkworms who can  
gather,  
Or silk from the yellow bee?  
The grass may grow in winter  
weather  
As soon as hate in me.

II

Hate men who cant, and men who  
pray,  
And men who rail like thee;  
An equal passion to repay  
They are not coy like me.

5

## III

Or seek some slave of power and  
gold  
To be thy dear heart's mate; 10  
Thy love will move that bigot  
cold  
Sooner than me, thy hate.

## IV

A passion like the one I prove  
Cannot divided be;  
I hate thy want of truth and  
love,  
How should I then hate thee? 16

## OZYMANDIAS

I MET a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, 5  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: 10  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

## NOTE ON POEMS OF 1817, BY MRS. SHELLEY

THE very illness that oppressed, and the aspect of death which had approached so near Shelley, appear to have kindled to yet keener life the Spirit of Poetry in his heart. The restless thoughts kept awake by pain clothed themselves in verse. Much was composed during this year. The *Revolt of Islam*, written and printed, was a great effort—*Rosalind and Helen* was begun—and the fragments and poems I can trace to the same period show how full of passion and reflection were his solitary hours.

In addition to such poems as have an intelligible aim and shape, many a stray idea and transitory emotion found imperfect and abrupt expression, and then again lost themselves in silence. As he never wandered without a book and without implements of writing, I find many such, in his manuscript books, that scarcely bear record; while some of them, broken and vague as they are, will appear valuable to those who love Shelley's mind, and desire to trace its workings.

He projected also translating the *Hymns* of Homer; his version of several of the shorter ones remains, as well as that to Mercury already published in the *Posthumous Poems*. His readings this year were chiefly Greek. Besides the *Hymns* of Homer and the *Iliad*, he read the dramas

of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the *Symposium* of Plato, and Arrian's *Historia Indica*. In Latin, Apuleius alone is named. In English, the Bible was his constant study; he read a great portion of it aloud in the evening. Among these evening readings I find also mentioned the *Faerie Queen*; and other modern works, the production of his contemporaries, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Moore, and Byron.

His life was now spent more in thought than action—he had lost the eager spirit which believed it could achieve what it projected for the benefit of mankind. And yet in the converse of daily life Shelley was far from being a melancholy man. He was eloquent when philosophy or politics or taste were the subjects of conversation. He was playful; and indulged in the wild spirit that mocked itself and others—not in bitterness, but in sport. The author of *Nightmare Abbey* seized on some points of his character and some habits of his life when he painted Scythrop. He was not addicted to 'port or madeira,' but in youth he had read of 'Illuminati and Eleutherarchs,' and believed that he possessed the power of operating an immediate change in the minds of men and the state & society. These wild dreams had faded; sorrow and adversity had struck home; but he struggled with despondency as he did with physical pain. There are few who remember him sailing paper boats; and watching the navigation of his tiny craft with eagerness—or repeating with wild energy *The Ancient Mariner*, and Southey's *Old Woman of Berkeley*; but those who do will recollect that it was in such, and in the creations of his own fancy when that was most daring and ideal, that he sheltered himself from the storms and disappointments, the pain and sorrow, that beset his life.

No words can express the anguish he felt when his elder children were torn from him. In his first resentment against the Chancellor, on the passing of the decree, he had written a curse, in which there breathes, besides haughty indignation, all the tenderness of a father's love, which could imagine and fondly dwell upon its loss and the consequences.

At one time, while the question was still pending, the Chancellor had said some words that seemed to intimate that Shelley should not be permitted the care of any of his children, and for a moment he feared that our infant son would be torn from us. He did not hesitate to resolve, if such were menaced, to abandon country, fortune, everything, and to escape with his child; and I find some unfinished stanzas addressed to this son, whom afterwards we lost at Rome, written under the idea that we might suddenly be forced to cross the sea, so to preserve him. This poem, as well as the one previously quoted, were not written to exhibit the pangs of distress to the public; they were the spontaneous outbursts of a man who brooded over his wrongs and woes, and was impelled to shed the grace of his genius over the uncontrollable emotions of his heart. I ought to observe that the fourth verse of this effusion is introduced in *Rosalind and Helen*. When afterwards this child died at Rome, he wrote, *à propos* of the English burying-ground in that city: 'This spot is the repository of a sacred loss, of which the yearnings of a parent's heart



are now prophetic; he is rendered immortal by love, as his memory is by death. My beloved child lies buried here. I envy death the body far less than the oppressors the minds of those whom they have torn from me. The one can only kill the body, the other crushes the affections.'

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1818

## TO THE NILE

MONTH after month the gathered rains descend  
 Drenching yon secret Aethiopian dells,  
 And from the desert's ice-girt pinnacles  
 Where Frost and Heat in strange embraces blend 5  
 On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend.  
 Girt there with blasts and meteors Tempest dwells  
 By Nile's æreal urn, with rapid spells  
 Urging those waters to their mighty end.  
 O'er Egypt's land of Memory floods are level  
 And they are thine, O Nile—and well thou knowest 10  
 That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil  
 And fruits and poisons spring where'er thou flowest.  
 Beware, O Man—for knowledge must to thee,  
 Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be.

## PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES

LISTEN, listen, Mary mine,  
 To the whisper of the Apennine,  
 It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,  
 Or like the sea on a northern shore,  
 Heard in its raging ebb and flow 5  
 By the captives pent in the cave below.  
 The Apennine in the light of day  
 Is a mighty mountain dim and gray,  
 Which between the earth and sky doth lay;  
 But when night comes, a chaos dread 10  
 On the dim starlight then is spread,  
 And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm,  
 Shrouding . . .

## THE PAST

## I

WILT thou forget the happy hours  
 Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,  
 Heaping over their corpses cold  
 Blossoms and leaves, instead of mould?  
 Blossoms which were the joys that fell, 5  
 And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

## II

Forget the dead, the past? Oh, yet  
 There are ghosts that may take revenge for it,  
 Memories that make the heart a tomb,  
 Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom, 10  
 And with ghastly whispers tell  
 That joy, once lost, is pain.

## TO MARY ———

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| O MARY dear, that you were here<br>With your brown eyes bright and<br>clear,<br>And your sweet voice, like a bird<br>Singing love to its lone mate<br>In the ivy bower disconsolate; 5<br>Voice the sweetest ever heard!<br>And your brow more . . .<br>Than the           sky | Of this azure Italy.<br>Mary dear, come to me soon, 10<br>I am not well whilst thou art far;<br>As sunset to the spherèd moon,<br>As twilight to the western star,<br>Thou, belovèd, art to me.<br>O Mary dear, that you were<br>here: 15<br>The Castle echo whispers 'Here!' |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## ON A FADED VIOLET

## I

THE odour from the flower is gone  
 Which like thy kisses breathed on me;  
 The colour from the flower is flown  
 Which glowed of thee and only thee!

## II

A shrivelled, lifeless, vacant form, 5  
 It lies on my abandoned breast,  
 And mocks the heart which yet is warm,  
 With cold and silent rest.

## III

I weep,—my tears revive it not!  
 I sigh,—it breathes no more on me; 10  
 Its mute and uncomplaining lot  
 Is such as mine should be.

## LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS

OCTOBER, 1818.

|                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MANY a green isle needs must be<br>In the deep wide sea of Misery,<br>Or the mariner, worn and wan,<br>Never thus could voyage on— | Day and night, and night and day,<br>Drifting on his dreary way, 6<br>With the solid darkness black<br>Closing round his vessel's track; |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Whilst above the sunless sky,  
Big with clouds, hangs heavily, 10  
And behind the tempest fleet  
Hurries on with lightning feet,  
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,  
Till the ship has almost drank 14  
Death from the o'er-brimming  
deep;

And sinks down, down, like that  
sleep

When the dreamer seems to be  
Weltering through eternity;  
And the dim low line before  
Of a dark and distant shore 20  
Still recedes, as ever still  
Longing with divided will,  
But no power to seek or shun,  
He is ever drifted on  
O'er the unrepousing wave 25  
To the haven of the grave.  
What, if there no friends will  
greet;

What, if there no heart will meet  
His with love's impatient beat;  
Wander wheresoe'er he may. 30  
Can he dream before that day  
To find refuge from distress  
In friendship's smile, in love's  
caress?

Then 'twill wreak him little woe  
Whether such there be or no: 35  
Senseless is the breast, and cold,  
Which relenting love would fold;  
Bloodless are the veins and chill  
Which the pulse of pain did fill;  
Every little living nerve 40  
That from bitter words did swerve  
Round the tortured lips and brow,  
Are like sapless leaflets now  
Frozen upon December's bough.

On the beach of a northern sea 45  
Which tempests shake eternally,  
As once the wretch there lay to  
sleep,  
Lies a solitary heap,

One white skull and seven dry  
bones,

On the margin of the stones, 50  
Where a few gray rushes stand,  
Boundaries of the sea and land:  
Nor is heard one voice of wail  
But the sea-mews, as they sail  
O'er the billows of the gale; 55  
Or the whirlwind up and down  
Howling, like a slaughtered town,  
When a king in glory rides  
Through the pomp of fratri-  
cides:

Those unburied bones around 60  
There is many a mournful sound;  
There is no lament for him,  
Like a sunless vapour, dim,  
Who once clothed with life and  
thought

What now moves nor murmurs not.

Ay, many flowering islands lie 66  
In the waters of wide Agony:  
To such a one this morn was led,  
My bark by soft winds piloted:  
'Mid the mountains Euganean 70  
I stood listening to the paean  
With which the legioned rooks did  
hail

The sun's uprise majestic;  
Gathering round with wings all  
hoar,  
Through the dewy mist they soar 75  
Like gray shades, till the eastern  
heaven

Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,  
Flecked with fire and azure, lie  
In the unfathomable sky,  
So their plumes of purple grain, 80  
Starred with drops of golden rain,  
Gleam above the sunlight woods,  
As in silent multitudes

On the morning's fitful gale 84  
Through the broken mist they sail,  
And the vapours cloven and gleam-  
ing

Follow down the dark steep  
streaming,  
'Till all is bright, and clear, and  
still,  
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green  
sea 90

The waveless plain of Lombardy,  
Bounded by the vaporous air,  
Islanded by cities fair;  
Underneath Day's azure eyes  
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies, 95  
A peopled labyrinth of walls,  
Amphitrite's destined halls,  
Which her hoary sire now paves  
With his blue and beaming waves.  
Lo! the sun upsprings behind, 100  
Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined  
On the level quivering line  
Of the waters crystalline;  
And before that chasm of light,  
As within a furnace bright, 105  
Column, tower, and dome, and  
spire,  
Shine like obelisks of fire,  
Pointing with inconstant motion  
From the altar of dark ocean  
To the sapphire-tinted skies; 110  
As the flames of sacrifice  
From the marble shrines did rise,  
As to pierce the dome of gold  
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City, thou hast been 115  
Ocean's child, and then his queen;  
Now is come a darker day,  
And thou soon must be his prey,  
If the power that raised thee here  
Hallow so thy watery bier. 120  
A less drear ruin than now,  
With thy conquest-branded brow  
Stooping to the slave of slaves  
From thy throne, among the waves  
Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew 125  
Flies, as once before it flew,  
O'er thine isles depopulate,

And all is in its ancient state,  
Save where many a palace gate  
With green sea-flowers overgrown  
Like a rock of Ocean's own, 131  
Topples o'er the abandoned sea  
As the tides change sullenly.  
The fisher on his watery way,  
Wandering at the close of day, 135  
Will spread his sail and seize his  
oar  
Till he pass the gloomy shore,  
Lest thy dead should, from their  
sleep  
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,  
Lead a rapid masque of death 140  
O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold  
Quivering through æreal gold,  
As I now behold them here,  
Would imagine not they were 145  
Sepulchres, where human forms,  
Like pollution-nourished worms,  
To the corpse of greatness cling,  
Murdered, and now mouldering:  
But if Freedom should awake 150  
In her omnipotence, and shake  
From the Celtic Anarch's hold  
All the keys of dungeons cold,  
Where a hundred cities lie  
Chained like thee, ingloriously, 155  
Thou and all thy sister band  
Might adorn this sunny land,  
Twining memories of old time  
With new virtues more sublime;  
If not, perish thou and they!— 160  
Clouds which stain truth's rising  
day

By her sun consumed away—  
Earth can spare ye: while like  
flowers,  
In the waste of years and hours,  
From your dust new nations spring  
With more kindly blossoming. 166

Perish—let there only be  
Floating o'er thy heartless sea

As the garment of thy sky  
Clothes the world immortally, 170  
One remembrance, more sublime  
Than the tattered pall of time,  
Which scarce hides thy visage  
wan;—

That a tempest-cleaving Swan  
Of the songs of Albion, 175  
Driven from his ancestral streams  
By the might of evil dreams,  
Found a nest in thee; and Ocean  
Welcomed him with such emotion  
That its joy grew his, and sprung  
From his lips like music flung 181  
O'er a mighty thunder-fit,  
Chastening terror:—what though  
yet

Poesy's unfailing River,  
Which through Albion winds for-  
ever

Lashing with melodious wave 186  
Many a sacred Poet's grave,  
Mourn its latest nursling fled?  
What though thou with all thy dead  
Scarce can for this fame repay 190  
Aught thine own? oh, rather say  
Though thy sins and slaveries foul  
Overcloud a sunlike soul?  
As the ghost of Homer clings  
Round Scamander's wasting  
springs; 195

As divinest Shakespeare's might  
Fills Avon and the world with light  
Like omniscient power which he  
Imaged 'mid mortality;  
As the love from Petrarch's urn, 200  
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,  
A quenchless lamp by which the  
heart

Sees things unearthly;—so thou  
art,  
Mighty spirit—so shall be  
The City that did refuge thee. 205

Lo, the sun floats up the sky  
Like thought-wingèd Liberty,

Till the universal light  
Seems to level plain and height;  
From the sea a mist has spread, 210  
And the beams of morn lie dead  
On the towers of Venice now,  
Like its glory long ago.  
By the skirts of that gray cloud  
Many-domèd Padua proud 215  
Stands, a peopled solitude,  
'Mid the harvest-shining plain,  
Where the peasant heaps his grain  
In the garner of his foe,  
And the milk-white oxen slow 220  
With the purple vintage strain,  
Heaped upon the creaking wain,  
That the brutal Celt may swill  
Drunken sleep with savage will;  
And the sickle to the sword 225  
Lies unchanged, though many a  
lord,

Like a weed whose shade is poison,  
Overgrows this region's foison,  
Sheaves of whom are ripe to come  
To destruction's harvest-home: 230  
Men must reap the things they  
sow,

Force from force must ever flow,  
Or worse; but 'tis a bitter woe  
That love or reason cannot change  
The despot's rage, the slave's re-  
venge.

Padua, thou within whose walls  
Those mute guests at festivals,  
Son and Mother, Death and Sin,  
Played at dice for Ezzelin, 239  
Till Death cried, "I win, I win!"  
And Sin cursed to lose the wager,  
But Death promised, to assuage  
her,

That he would petition for  
Her to be made Vice-Emperor,  
When the destined years were o'er,  
Over all between the Po 246  
And the eastern Alpine snow,  
Under the mighty Austrian.  
Sin smiled so as Sin only can,

And since that time, ay, long be-  
fore, 250  
Both have ruled from shore to  
shore,—

That incestuous pair, who follow  
Tyrants as the sun the swallow,  
As Repentance follows Crime,  
And as changes follow Time. 255

In thine halls the lamp of learning,  
Padua, now no more is burning;  
Like a meteor, whose wild way  
Is lost over the grave of day,  
It gleams betrayed and to betray:  
Once remotest nations came 261  
To adore that sacred flame,  
When it lit not many a hearth  
On this cold and gloomy earth:  
Now new fires from antique light  
Spring beneath the wide world's  
might; 266

But their spark lies dead in thee,  
Trampled out by Tyranny.  
As the Norway woodman quells,  
In the depth of piny dells, 270  
One light flame among the brakes,  
While the boundless forest shakes,  
And its mighty trunks are torn  
By the fire thus lowly born:  
The spark beneath his feet is dead,  
He starts to see the flames it fed 276  
Howling through the darkened sky  
With a myriad tongues victoriously,  
And sinks down in fear: so thou,  
O Tyranny, beholdest now 280  
Light around thee, and thou hearest  
The loud flames ascend, and fear-  
est:

Grovel on the earth; ay, hide  
In the dust thy purple pride!

Noon descends around me now: 285  
'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,  
When a soft and purple mist  
Like a vaporous amethyst,  
Or an air-dissolvèd star  
Mingling light and fragrance,  
far 290

From the curved horizon's bound  
To the point of Heaven's profound,  
Fills the overflowing sky;  
And the plains that silent lie  
Underneath, the leaves unsod-  
den 295

Where the infant Frost has trodden  
With his morning-wingèd feet,  
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;  
And the red and golden vines,  
Piercing with their trellised lines 300  
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;  
The dun and bladed grass no less,  
Pointing from this hoary tower  
In the windless air; the flower  
Glimmering at my feet; the line 305  
Of the olive-sandalled Apennine  
In the south dimly islanded;  
And the Alps, whose snows are  
spread

High between the clouds and sun;  
And of living things each one; 310  
And my spirit which so long  
Darkened this swift stream of  
song,—

Interpenetrated lie  
By the glory of the sky:  
Be it love, light, harmony, 315  
Odour, or the soul of all  
Which from Heaven like dew doth  
fall,

Or the mind which feeds this verse  
Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon 320  
Autumn's evening meets me soon,  
Leading the infantine moon,  
And that one star, which to her  
Almost seems to minister  
Half the crimson light she brings 325  
From the sunset's radiant springs:  
And the soft dreams of the morn  
(Which like wingèd winds had  
borne

To that silent isle, which lies  
Mid remembered agonies, 330  
The frail bark of this lone being)  
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,

And its ancient pilot, Pain,  
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be 335  
In the sea of Life and Agony:  
Other spirits float and flee  
O'er that gulf: even now, perhaps,  
On some rock the wild wave wraps,  
With folded wings they waiting sit  
For my bark, to pilot it 341  
To some calm and blooming cove,  
Where for me, and those I love,  
May a windless bower be built,  
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,  
In a dell mid lawny hills, 346  
Which the wild-sea murmur fills,  
And soft sunshine, and the sound  
Of old forests echoing round,  
And the light and smell divine 350  
Of all flowers that breathe and  
shine:

We may live so happy there,  
That the Spirits of the Air,

Envying us, may even entice  
To our healing Paradise 355  
The polluting multitude;  
But their rage would be subdued  
By that clime divine and calm,  
And the winds whose wings rain  
balm  
On the uplifted soul, and leaves 360  
Under which the bright sea  
heaves;  
While each breathless interval  
In their whisperings musical  
The inspired soul supplies  
With its own deep melodies, 365  
And the love which heals all strife  
Circling, like the breath of life,  
All things in that sweet abode  
With its own mild brotherhood:  
They, not it, would change; and  
soon 370  
Every sprite beneath the moon  
Would repent its envy vain,  
And the earth grow young again.

## SCENE FROM 'TASSO'

MADDALO, *a Courtier*.  
MALPIGLIO, *a Poet*.

PIGNA, *a Minister*.  
ALBANO, *an Usher*.

*Maddalo*. No access to the Duke! You have not said  
That the Count Maddalo would speak with him?

*Pigna*. Did you inform his Grace that Signor Pigna  
Waits with state papers for his signature?

*Malpiglio*. The Lady Leonora cannot know 5  
That I have written a sonnet to her fame,  
In which I Venus and Adonis.  
You should not take my gold and serve me not.

*Albano*. In truth I told her, and she smiled and said,  
'If I am Venus, thou, coy Poesy, 10  
Art the Adonis whom I love, and he  
The Erymanthian boar that wounded him.'  
O trust to me, Signor Malpiglio,  
Those nods and smiles were favours worth the zechin.

*Malpiglio*. The words are twisted in some double sense 15  
That I reach not: the smiles fell not on me.

*Pigna*. How are the Duke and Duchess occupied?

*Albano*. Buried in some strange talk. The Duke was leaning,  
His finger on his brow, his lips unclosed

The Princess sate within the window-seat, 20  
 And so her face was hid; but on her knee  
 Her hands were clasped, veinèd, and pale as snow,  
 And quivering—young Tasso, too, was there.  
*Maddalo.* Thou seest on whom from thine own worshipped  
 heaven  
 Thou drawest down smiles—they did not rain on thee. 25  
*Malpiglio.* Would they were parching lightnings for his sake  
 On whom they fe'll!

## SONG FOR 'TASSO'

## I

I LOVED—alas! our life is love;  
 But when we cease to breathe and move  
 I do suppose love ceases too.  
 I thought, but not as now I do,  
 Keen thoughts and bright of linkèd lore, 5  
 Of all that men had thought before,  
 And all that Nature shows. and more.

## II

And still I love and still I think,  
 But strangely, for my heart can drink  
 The dregs of such despair, and live, 10  
 And love; . . .  
 And if I think, my thoughts come fast,  
 I mix the present with the past,  
 And each seems uglier than the last.

## III

Sometimes I see before me flee 15  
 A silver spirit's form, like thee,  
 O Leonora, and I sit  
 . . . still watching it,  
 Till by the grated casement's ledge  
 It fades, with such a sigh, as sedge 20  
 Breathes o'er the breezy streamlet's edge.

## INVOCATION TO MISERY

## I

COME, be happy!—sit near me,  
 Shadow-vested Misery:  
 Coy, unwilling, silent bride,  
 Mourning in thy robe of pride,  
 Desolation—deified!

5

## II

Come, be happy!—sit near me:  
 Sad as I may seem to thee,  
 I am happier far than thou,  
 Lady, whose imperial brow  
 Is endiademed with woe. 10



## III

Misery! we have known each other,  
Like a sister and a brother  
Living in the same lone home,  
Many years—we must live some  
Hours or ages yet to come. 15

## IV

'Tis an evil lot, and yet  
Let us make the best of it;  
If love can live when pleasure dies,  
We two will love, till in our eyes  
This heart's Hell seem Paradise. 20

## V

Come, be happy!—lie thee down  
On the fresh grass newly mown,  
Where the Grasshopper doth sing  
Merrily—one joyous thing  
In a world of sorrowing! 25

## VI

There our tent shall be the willow,  
And mine arm shall be thy pillow;  
Sounds and odours, sorrowful  
Because they once were sweet, shall  
lull  
Us to slumber, deep and dull. 30

## VII

Ha! thy frozen pulses flutter  
With a love thou darest not utter.  
Thou art murmuring—thou art  
weeping—  
Is thine icy bosom leaping  
While my burning heart lies sleep-  
ing? 35

## VIII

Kiss me;—oh! thy lips are cold:  
Round my neck thine arms en-  
fold—

They are soft, but chill and dead;  
And thy tears upon my head  
Burn like points of frozen lead. 40

## IX

Hasten to the bridal bed—  
Underneath the grave 'tis spread:  
In darkness may our love be hid,  
Oblivion be our coverlid—  
We may rest, and none forbid. 45

## X

Clasp me till our hearts be grown  
Like two shadows into one;  
Till this dreadful transport may  
Like a vapour fade away,  
In the sleep that lasts away. 50

## XI

We may dream, in that long sleep,  
That we are not those who weep;  
E'en as Pleasure dreams of thee,  
Life-deserting Misery,  
Thou mayst dream of her with  
me. 55

## XII

Let us laugh, and make our mirth,  
At the shadows of the earth,  
As dogs bay the moonlight clouds,  
Which, like spectres wrapped in  
shrouds,  
Pass o'er night in multitudes. 60

## XIII

All the wide world, beside us,  
Show like multitudinous  
Puppets passing from a scene;  
What but mockery can they mean,  
Where I am—where thou hast  
been? 65

## STANZAS

## WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

## I

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,  
 The waves are dancing fast and bright,  
 Blue isles and snowy mountains wear  
 The purple noon's transparent might,  
 The breath of the moist earth is light, 5  
 Around its unexpanded buds;  
 Like many a voice of one delight,  
 The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,  
 The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.

## II

I see the Deep's untrampled floor 10  
 With green and purple seaweeds strown;  
 I see the waves upon the shore,  
 Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:  
 I sit upon the sands alone,—  
 The lightning of the noontide ocean 15  
 Is flashing round me, and a tone  
 Arises from its measured motion,  
 How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

## III

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,  
 Nor peace within nor calm around, 20  
 Nor that content surpassing wealth  
 The sage in meditation found,  
 And walked with inward glory crowned—  
 Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.  
 Others I see whom these surround— 25  
 Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;—  
 To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

## IV

Yet now despair itself is mild,  
 Even as the winds and waters are;  
 I could lie down like a tired child, 30  
 And weep away the life of care  
 Which I have borne and yet must bear,  
 Till death like sleep might steal on me,  
 And I might feel in the warm air  
 My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea 35  
 Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

## V

Some might lament that I were cold,  
 As I, when this sweet day is gone,  
 Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,  
 Insults with this untimely moan; 40  
 They might lament—for I am one  
 Whom men love not,—and yet regret,  
 Unlike this day, which, when the sun  
 Shall on its stainless glory set,  
 Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet. 45

## THE WOODMAN AND THE NIGHTINGALE

A WOODMAN whose rough heart was out of tune  
 (I think such hearts yet never came to good)  
 Hated to hear, under the stars or moon,  
 One nightingale in an interfluous wood  
 Sate the hungry dark with melody;— 5  
 And as a vale is watered by a flood,  
 Or as the moonlight fills the open sky  
 Struggling with darkness—as a tuberosé  
 Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie  
 Like clouds above the flower from which they rose, 10  
 The singing of that happy nightingale  
 In this sweet forest, from the golden close  
 Of evening till the star of dawn may fail,  
 Was interfused upon the silentness;  
 The folded roses and the violets pale 15  
 Heard her within their slumbers, the abyss  
 Of heaven with all its planets; the dull ear  
 Of the night-cradled earth; the loneliness  
 Of the circumfluous waters,—every sphere  
 And every flower and beam and cloud and wave, 20  
 And every wind of the mute atmosphere,  
 And every beast stretched in its rugged cave,  
 And every bird lulled on its mossy bough,  
 And every silver moth fresh from the grave  
 Which is its cradle—ever from below 25  
 Aspiring like one who loves too fair, too far,  
 To be consumed within the purest glow

Of one serene and unapproachèd star,  
 As if it were a lamp of earthly light,  
 Unconscious, as some human lovers are, 30

Itself how low, how high beyond all height  
 The heaven where it would perish!—and every form  
 That worshipped in the temple of the night

Was awed into delight, and by the charm  
 Girt as with an interminable zone, 35  
 Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm

Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion  
 Out of their dreams; harmony became love  
 In every soul but one.

And so this man returned with axe and saw 40  
 At evening close from killing the tall treen,  
 The soul of whom by Nature's gentle law

Was each a wood-nymph, and kept ever green  
 The pavement and the roof of the wild copse,  
 Chequering the sunlight of the blue serene 45

With jagged leaves,—and from the forest tops  
 Singing the winds to sleep—or weeping oft  
 Fast showers of aëreal water-drops

Into their mother's bosom, sweet and soft,  
 Nature's pure tears which have no bitterness;— 50  
 Around the cradles of the birds aloft

They spread themselves into the loveliness  
 Of fan-like leaves, and over pallid flowers  
 Hang like moist clouds:—or, where high branches kiss,

Make a green space among the silent bowers, 55  
 Like a vast fane in a metropolis,  
 Surrounded by the columns and the towers

All overwrought with branch-like traceries  
 In which there is religion—and the mute  
 Persuasion of unkindled melodies, 60

Odours and gleams and murmurs, which the lute  
 Of the blind pilot-spirit of the blast  
 Stirs as it sails, now grave and now acute,

Wakening the leaves and waves, ere it has passed  
To such brief unison as on the brain  
One tone, which never can recur, has cast,  
One accent never to return again.

65

The world is full of Woodmen who expel  
Love's gentle Dryads from the haunts of life,  
And vex the nightingales in every dell.

70

# MARENGHI <sup>1</sup>

## I

LET those who pine in pride or in revenge,  
Or think that ill for ill should be repaid,  
Who barter wrong for wrong, until the exchange  
Ruins the merchants of such thriftless trade,  
Visit the tower of Vado, and unlearn  
Such bitter faith beside Marengi's urn.

5

## II

A massy tower yet overhangs the town,  
A scattered group of ruined dwellings now . . . .

## III

Another scene ere wise Etruria knew  
Its second ruin through internal strife,  
And tyrants through the breach of discord threw  
The chain which binds and kills. As death to life,  
As winter to fair flowers (though some be poison)  
So Monarchy succeeds to Freedom's foison.

10

## IV

In Pisa's church a cup of sculptured gold  
Was brimming with the blood of feuds forsworn:  
A Sacrament more holy ne'er of old  
Etrurians mingled mid the shades forlorn  
Of moon-illuminated forests, when . . . .

15

## V

And reconciling factions wet their lips  
With that dread wine, and swear to keep each spirit  
Undarkened by their country's last eclipse . . . .

20

<sup>1</sup> This fragment refers to an event told in Sismondi's *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, which occurred during the war when Florence finally subdued Pisa, and reduced it to a province.—[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE, 1824.]

## VI

Was Florence the liberticide? that band  
 Of free and glorious brothers who had planted,  
 Like a green isle mid Aethiopian sand, 25  
 A nation amid slaveries, disenchanted  
 Of many impious faiths—wise, just—do they,  
 Does Florence, gorge the sated tyrants' prey?

## VII

O foster-nurse of man's abandoned glory,  
 Since Athens, its great mother, sunk in splendour; 30  
 Thou shadowest forth that mighty shape in story,  
 As ocean its wrecked fanes, severe yet tender:—  
 The light-invested angel Poesy  
 Was drawn from the dim world to welcome thee.

## VIII

And thou in painting didst transcribe all taught 35  
 By loftiest meditations; marble knew  
 The sculptor's fearless soul—and as he wrought,  
 The grace of his own power and freedom grew.  
 And more than all, heroic, just, sublime,  
 Thou wert among the false . . . was this thy crime? 40

## IX

Yes; and on Pisa's marble walls the twine  
 Of direst weeds hangs garlanded—the snake  
 Inhabits its wrecked palaces;—in thine  
 A beast of subtler venom now doth make  
 Its lair, and sits amid their glories overthrown, 45  
 And thus thy victim's fate is as thine own.

## X

The sweetest flowers are ever frail and rare,  
 And love and freedom blossom but to wither;  
 And good and ill like vines entangled are,  
 So that their grapes may oft be plucked together;— 50  
 Divide the vintage ere thou drink, then make  
 Thy heart rejoice for dead Marenghi's sake.

## x a

[Albert] Marenghi was a Florentine;  
 If he had wealth, or children, or a wife  
 Or friends, [or farm] or cherished thoughts which twine 55  
 The sights and sounds of home with life's own life  
 Of these he was despoiled and Florence sent . . . .  
 . . . . .

## XI

No record of his crime remains in story,  
 But if the morning bright as evening shone,  
 It was some high and holy deed, by glory 60  
 Pursued into forgetfulness, which won  
 From the blind crowd he made secure and free  
 The patriot's meed, toil, death, and infamy

## XII

For when by sound of trumpet was declared  
 A price upon his life, and there was set 65  
 A penalty of blood on all who shared  
 So much of water with him as might wet  
 His lips, which speech divided not—he went  
 Alone, as you may guess, to banishment.

## XIII

Amid the mountains, like a hunted beast, 70  
 He hid himself, and hunger, toil, and cold,  
 Month after month endured; it was a feast  
 Whene'er he found those globes of deep-red gold  
 Which in the woods the strawberry-tree doth bear,  
 Suspended in their emerald atmosphere. 75

## XIV

And in the roofless huts of vast morasses,  
 Deserted by the fever-stricken serf,  
 All overgrown with reeds and long rank grasses,  
 And hillocks heaped of moss-inwoven turf,  
 And where the huge and speckled aloe made, 80  
 Rooted in stones, a broad and pointed shade,—

## XV

He housed himself. There is a point of strand  
 Near Vado's tower and town; and on one side  
 The treacherous marsh divides it from the land,  
 Shadowed by pine and ilex forests wide, 85  
 And on the other, creeps eternally,  
 Through muddy weeds, the shallow sullen sea.

## XVI

Here the earth's breath is pestilence, and few  
 But things whose nature is at war with life—  
 Snakes and ill worms—endure its mortal dew. 90  
 The trophies of the clime's victorious strife—  
 And ringed horns which the buffalo did wear,  
 And the wolf's dark gray scalp who tracked him there.

## XVII

And at the utmost point . . . stood there  
 The relics of a reed-inwoven cot, 95  
 Thatched with broad flags. An outlawed murderer  
 Had lived seven days there: the pursuit was hot  
 When he was cold. The birds that were his grave  
 Fell dead after their feast in Vado's wave.

## XVIII

There must have burned within Marenghi's breast 100  
 That fire, more warm and bright than life and hope,  
 (Which to the martyr makes his dungeon . . .  
 More joyous than free heaven's majestic cope  
 To his oppressor), warring with decay,—  
 Or he could ne'er have lived years, day by day. 105

## XIX

Nor was his state so lone as you might think.  
 He had tamed every newt and snake and toad,  
 And every seagull which sailed down to drink  
 Those freshes ere the death-mist went abroad. 110  
 And each one, with peculiar talk and play,  
 Wiled, not untaught, his silent time away.

## XX

And the marsh-meteors, like tame beasts, at night  
 Came licking with blue tongues his veined feet;  
 And he would watch them, as, like spirits bright,  
 In many entangled figures quaint and sweet 115  
 To some enchanted music they would dance—  
 Until they vanished at the first moon-glance.

## XXI

He mocked the stars by grouping on each weed  
 The summer dew-globes in the golden dawn;  
 And, ere the hoar-frost languished, he could read 120  
 Its pictured path, as on bare spots of lawn  
 Its delicate brief touch in silver weaves  
 The likeness of the wood's remembered leaves.

## XXII

And many a fresh Spring morn would he awaken—  
 While yet the unrisen sun made glow, like iron 125  
 Quivering in crimson fire, the peaks unshaken  
 Of mountains and blue isles which did environ  
 With air-clad crags that plain of land and sea,—  
 And feel liberty.



## XXIII

And in the moonless nights, when the dun ocean 130  
 Heaved underneath wide heaven, star-impearled,  
 Starting from dreams . . .  
 Communed with the immeasurable world;  
 And felt his life beyond his limbs dilated,  
 Till his mind grew like that it contemplated. 135

## XXIV

His food was the wild fig and strawberry;  
 The milky pine-nuts which the autumn-blast  
 Shakes into the tall grass; or such small fry  
 As from the sea by winter-storms are cast;  
 And the coarse bulbs of iris-flowers he found 140  
 Knotted in clumps under the spongy ground.

## XXV

And so were kindled powers and thoughts which made  
 His solitude less dark. When memory came  
 (For years gone by leave each a deepening shade),  
 His spirit basked in its internal flame,— 145  
 As, when the black storm hurries round at night,  
 The fisher basks beside his red firelight.

## XXVI

Yet human hopes and cares and faiths and errors,  
 Like billows unawakened by the wind,  
 Slept in Marenghi still; but that all terrors, 150  
 Weakness, and doubt, had withered in his mind.  
 His couch . . .  
 . . . . .

## XXVII

And, when he saw beneath the sunset's planet  
 A black ship walk over the crimson ocean,—  
 Its pennon streaming on the blasts that fan it, 155  
 Its sails and ropes all tense and without motion,  
 Like the dark ghost of the unburied even  
 Striding athwart the orange-coloured heaven,—

## XXVIII

The thought of his own kind who made the soul  
 Which sped that wingèd shape through night and day,— 160  
 The thought of his own country . . .

## SONNET

LIFT not the painted veil which those who live  
 Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,  
 And it but mimic all we would believe  
 With colours idly spread,—behind, lurk Fear 5  
 And Hope, twin Destinies; who ever weave  
 Their shadows, o'er the chasm, sightless and drear.  
 I knew one who had lifted it—he sought,  
 For his lost heart was tender, things to love,  
 But found them not, alas! nor was there aught 10  
 The world contains, the which he could approve.  
 Through the unheeding many he did move,  
 A splendour among shadows, a bright blot  
 Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove  
 For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.

## FRAGMENT: TO BYRON

O MIGHTY mind, in whose deep stream this age  
 Shakes like a reed in the unheeding storm,  
 Why dost thou curb not thine own sacred rage?

## FRAGMENT: APOSTROPHE TO SILENCE

SILENCE! Oh, well are Death and Sleep and Thou  
 Three brethren named, the guardians gloomy-winged  
 Of one abyss, where life, and truth, and joy  
 Are swallowed up—yet spare me, Spirit, pity me, 5  
 Until the sounds I hear become my soul,  
 And it has left these faint and weary limbs,  
 To track along the lapses of the air  
 This wandering melody until it rests  
 Among lone mountains in some . . .

## FRAGMENT: THE LAKE'S MARGIN

THE fierce beasts of the woods and wildernesses  
 Track not the steps of him who drinks of it;  
 For the light breezes, which for ever fleet  
 Around its margin, heap the sand thereon.

## FRAGMENT: 'MY HEAD IS WILD WITH WEEPING'

My head is wild with weeping for a grief  
 Which is the shadow of a gentle mind.  
 I walk into the air (but no relief  
 To seek,—or haply, if I sought, to find;  
 It came unsought);—to wonder that a chief 5  
 Among men's spirits should be cold and blind.

## FRAGMENT: THE VINE-SHROUD

Flourishing vine, whose kindling clusters glow  
Beneath the autumnal sun, none taste of thee;  
For thou dost shroud a ruin, and below  
The rotting bones of dead antiquity.

## NOTE ON POEMS OF 1818, BY MRS. SHELLEY

WE often hear of persons disappointed by a first visit to Italy. This was not Shelley's case. The aspect of its nature, its sunny sky, its majestic storms, of the luxuriant vegetation of the country, and the noble marble-built cities, enchanted him. The sight of the works of art was full enjoyment and wonder. He had not studied pictures or statues before; he now did so with the eye of taste, that referred not to the rules of schools, but to those of Nature and truth. The first entrance to Rome opened to him a scene of remains of antique grandeur that far surpassed his expectations; and the unspeakable beauty of Naples and its environs added to the impression he received of the transcendent and glorious beauty of Italy.

Our winter was spent at Naples. Here he wrote the fragments of *Marengi* and *The Woodman and the Nightingale*, which he afterwards threw aside. At this time, Shelley suffered greatly in health. He put himself under the care of a medical man, who promised great things, and made him endure severe bodily pain, without any good results. Constant and poignant physical suffering exhausted him; and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness, and often greatly enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples, and our excursions on its sunny sea, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts, shadowed by illness, became gloomy,—and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses, which he hid from fear of wounding me, poured forth morbid but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness. One looks back with unspeakable regret and gnawing remorse to such periods; fancying that, had one been more alive to the nature of his feelings, and more attentive to soothe them, such would not have existed. And yet, enjoying as he appeared to do every sight or influence of earth or sky, it was difficult to imagine that any melancholy he showed was aught but the effect of the constant pain to which he was a martyr.

We lived in utter solitude. And such is often not the nurse of cheerfulness; for then, at least with those who have been exposed to adversity, the mind broods over its sorrows too intently; while the society of the enlightened, the witty, and the wise, enables us to forget ourselves by making us the sharers of the thoughts of others, which is a portion of the philosophy of happiness. Shelley never liked society in numbers,—it harassed and wearied him; but neither did he like loneliness, and usually, when alone, sheltered himself against memory and reflection in a book. But, with one or two whom he loved, he gave way to wild and joyous spirits, or in more serious conversation expounded his opinions with

vivacity and eloquence. If an argument arose, no man ever argued better. He was clear, logical, and earnest, in supporting his own views; attentive, patient, and impartial, while listening to those on the adverse side. Had not a wall of prejudice been raised at this time between him and his countrymen, how many would have sought the acquaintance of one whom to know was to love and to revere! How many of the more enlightened of his contemporaries have since regretted that they did not seek him! how very few knew his worth while he lived! and, of those few, several were withheld by timidity or envy from declaring their sense of it. But no man was ever more enthusiastically loved—more looked up to, as one superior to his fellows in intellectual endowments and moral worth, by the few who knew him well, and had sufficient nobleness of soul to appreciate his superiority. His excellence is now acknowledged; but, even while admitted, not duly appreciated. For who, except those who were acquainted with him, can imagine his unwearied benevolence, his generosity, his systematic forbearance? And still less is his vast superiority in intellectual attainments sufficiently understood—his sagacity, his clear understanding, his learning, his prodigious memory. All these, as displayed in conversation, were known to few while he lived, and are now silent in the tomb:

'Ahi orbo mondo ingrato!  
Gran cagion hai di dover pianger meco;  
Chè quel ben ch' era in te, perduto' hai seco.'

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1819

### LINES WRITTEN DURING THE CASTLEREAGH ADMINISTRATION

#### I

CORPSES are cold in the tomb;  
Stones on the pavement are dumb;  
Abortions are dead in the womb,  
And their mothers look pale—like the death-white shore  
Of Albion, free no more. 5

#### II

Her sons are as stones in the way—  
They are masses of senseless clay—  
They are trodden, and move not away,—  
The abortion with which *she* travaileth  
Is Liberty, smitten to death. 10

#### III

Then trample and dance, thou Oppressor!  
For thy victim is no redresser;  
Thou art sole lord and possessor  
Of her corpses, and clods, and abortions—they pave  
Thy path to the grave. 15

## IV

Hearest thou the festival din  
 Of Death, and Destruction, and Sin,  
 And Wealth crying *Havoc!* within?  
 'Tis the bacchanal triumph that makes Truth dumb,  
 Thine Epithalamium. 20

## V

Ay, marry thy ghastly wife!  
 Let Fear and Disquiet and Strife  
 Spread thy couch in the chamber of Life!  
 Marry Ruin, thou Tyrant! and Hell be thy guide  
 To the bed of the bride! 25

## SONG TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND

## I

MEN of England, wherefore plough  
 For the lords who lay ye low?  
 Wherefore weave with toil and care  
 The rich robes your tyrants wear?

## II

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and  
 save, 5  
 From the cradle to the grave,  
 Those ungrateful drones who would  
 Drain your sweat—nay, drink your  
 blood?

## III

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge  
 Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,  
 That these stingless drones may  
 spoil 11  
 The forced produce of your toil?

## IV

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,  
 Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?  
 Or what is it ye buy so dear 15  
 With your pain and with your fear?

## V

The seed ye sow, another reaps;  
 The wealth ye find, another keeps;

The robes ye weave, another wears;  
 The arms ye forge, another bears. 20

## VI

Sow seed,—but let no tyrant reap;  
 Find wealth,—let no impostor  
 heap;  
 Weave robes,—let not the idle  
 wear;  
 Forge arms,—in your defence to  
 bear.

## VII

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and  
 cells; 25  
 In halls ye deck another dwells.  
 Why shake the chains ye wrought?  
 Ye see  
 The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

## VIII

With plough and spade, and hoe  
 and loom,  
 Trace your grave, and build your  
 tomb, 30  
 And weave your winding-sheet, till  
 fair  
 England be your sepulchre.

## SIMILES FOR TWO POLITICAL CHARACTERS OF 1819

## I

As from an ancestral oak  
 Two empty ravens sound their  
 clarion,  
 Yell by yell, and croak by croak,  
 When they scent the noonday  
 smoke  
 Of fresh human carrion:— 5

## II

As two gibbering night-birds flit  
 From their bowers of deadly  
 yew  
 Through the night to frighten it,  
 When the moon is in a fit,  
 And the stars are none, or  
 few:—

## III

As a shark and dog-fish wait 11  
 Under an Atlantic isle,  
 For the negro-ship, whose freight  
 Is the theme of their debate,  
 Wrinkling their red gills the  
 while— 15

## IV

Are ye, two vultures sick for battle,  
 Two scorpions under one wet  
 stone,  
 Two bloodless wolves whose dry  
 throats rattle,  
 Two crows perched on the mur-  
 rained cattle,  
 Two vipers tangled into one. 20

## FRAGMENT: TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND

PEOPLE of England, ye who toil and groan,  
 Who reap the harvests which are not your own,  
 Who weave the clothes which your oppressors wear,  
 And for your own take the inclement air;  
 Who build warm houses . . . 5  
 And are like gods who give them all they have,  
 And nurse them from the cradle to the grave . . .

## FRAGMENT: 'WHAT MEN GAIN FAIRLY'

WHAT men gain fairly—that they should possess,  
 And children may inherit idleness,  
 From him who earns it—This is understood;  
 Private injustice may be general good.  
 But he who gains by base and armed wrong, 5  
 Or guilty fraud, or base compliances,  
 May be despoiled; even as a stolen dress  
 Is stripped from a convicted thief, and he  
 Left in the nakedness of infamy.

## A NEW NATIONAL ANTHEM

| I                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | IV                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>God prosper, speed, and save,<br/>         God raise from England's grave<br/>             Her murdered Queen!<br/>         Pave with swift victory<br/>         The steps of Liberty,<br/>         Whom Britons own to be<br/>             Immortal Queen.</p>                | <p>'Wilder her enemies<br/>         In their own dark disguise,—<br/>             God save our Queen!<br/>         All earthly things that dare<br/>         Her sacred name to bear,<br/>         Strip them, as kings are, bare;<br/>             God save the Queen!</p>        |
| 5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 25                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| II                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | V                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>See, she comes throned on high,<br/>         On swift Eternity!<br/>             God save the Queen!<br/>         Millions on millions wait,<br/>         Firm, rapid, and elate,<br/>         On her majestic state!<br/>             God save the Queen!</p>                 | <p>Be her eternal throne<br/>         Built in our hearts alone—<br/>             God save the Queen!<br/>         Let the oppressor hold<br/>         Canopied seats of gold;<br/>         She sits enthroned of old<br/>             O'er our hearts Queen.</p>                  |
| 10                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 30                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 35                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| III                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | VI                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>She is Thine own pure soul<br/>         Moulding the mighty whole,—<br/>             God save the Queen!<br/>         She is Thine own deep love<br/>         Rained down from Heaven above,—<br/>         Wherever she rest or move,<br/>             God save our Queen!</p> | <p>Lips touched by seraphim<br/>         Breathe out the choral hymn<br/>             'God save the Queen!'<br/>         Sweet as if angels sang,<br/>         Loud as that trumpet's clang<br/>         Wakening the world's dead gang,—<br/>             God save the Queen!</p> |
| 15                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 40                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 20                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

## SONNET: ENGLAND IN 1819

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,—  
 Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow  
 Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring,—  
 Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,  
 But leech-like to their fainting country cling,  
 Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—  
 A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—  
 An army, which liberticide and prey  
 Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield,—  
 Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;  
 Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;  
 A Senate,—Time's worst statute unrepealed,—  
 Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may  
 Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

## AN ODE

WRITTEN OCTOBER, 1819, BEFORE THE SPANIARDS HAD RECOVERED  
THEIR LIBERTY

ARISE, arise, arise!  
 There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread;  
 Be your wounds like eyes  
 To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.  
 What other grief were it just to pay? 5  
 Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they;  
 Who said they were slain on the battle day?  
 Awaken, awaken, awaken!  
 The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes;  
 Be the cold chains shaken 10  
 To the dust where your kindred repose, repose:  
 Their bones in the grave will start and move,  
 When they hear the voices of those they love,  
 Most loud in the holy combat above.  
 Wave, wave high the banner! 15  
 When Freedom is riding to conquest by:  
 Though the slaves that fan her  
 Be Famine and Toil, giving sigh for sigh.  
 And ye who attend her imperial car,  
 Lift not your hands in the banded war, 20  
 But in her defence whose children ye are.  
 Glory, glory, glory,  
 To those who have greatly suffered and done!  
 Never name in story  
 Was greater than that which ye shall have won. 25  
 Conquerors have conquered their foes alone,  
 Whose revenge, pride, and power they have overthrown:  
 Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.  
 Bind, bind every brow  
 With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine: 30  
 Hide the blood-stains now  
 With hues which sweet Nature has made divine:  
 Green strength, azure hope, and eternity:  
 But let not the pansy among them be;  
 Ye were injured, and that means memory. 35

## CANCELLED STANZA

GATHER, O gather,  
 Foeman and friend in love and peace!  
 Waves sleep together  
 When the blasts that called them to battle, cease.



The Champak odours fail  
 Like sweet thoughts in a dream;  
 The nightingale's complaint,  
 It dies upon her heart;—  
 As I must on thine,  
 Oh, belovèd as thou art!

15

## III

Oh lift me from the grass!  
 I die! I faint! I fail!

Let thy love in kisses rain  
 On my lips and eyelids pale. 20  
 My cheek is cold and white, alas!  
 My heart beats loud and fast;—  
 Oh! press it to thine own again,  
 Where it will break at last.

## CANCELLED PASSAGE

O PILLOW cold and wet with tears!  
 Thou breathest sleep no more!

## TO SOPHIA [MISS STACEY]

## I

THOU art fair, and few are fairer  
 Of the Nymphs of earth or ocean;  
 They are robes that fit the wearer—  
 Those soft limbs of thine, whose motion  
 Ever falls and shifts and glances 5  
 As the life within them dances.

## II

Thy deep eyes, a double Planet,  
 Gaze the wisest into madness  
 With soft clear fire,—the winds that fan it  
 Are those thoughts of tender gladness 10  
 Which, like zephyrs on the billow,  
 Make thy gentle soul their pillow.

## III

If, whatever face thou paintest  
 In those eyes, grows pale with pleasure,  
 If the fainting soul is faintest 15  
 When it hears thy harp's wild measure,  
 Wonder not that when thou speakest  
 Of the weak my heart is weakest.

## IV

As dew beneath the wind of morning,  
 As the sea which whirlwinds waken, 20  
 As the birds at thunder's warning,  
 As aught mute yet deeply shaken,  
 As one who feels an unseen spirit  
 Is my heart when thine is near it.

## TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

(With what truth may I say—  
 Roma! Roma! Roma!  
 Non è più come era prima!)

## I

My lost William, thou in whom  
 Some bright spirit lived, and did  
 That decaying robe consume  
 Which its lustre faintly hid,—  
 Here its ashes find a tomb, 5  
 But beneath this pyramid  
 Thou art not—if a thing divine  
 Like thee can die, thy funeral  
 shrine  
 Is thy mother's grief and mine.

## II

Where art thou, my gentle child? 10  
 Let me think thy spirit feeds,  
 With its life intense and mild,  
 The love of living leaves and  
 weeds  
 Among these tombs and ruins  
 wild;—  
 Let me think that through low  
 seeds 15  
 Of sweet flowers and sunny grass  
 Into their hues and scents may  
 pass  
 A portion—

## TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

Thy little footsteps on the sands  
 Of a remote and lonely shore;  
 The twinkling of thine infant hands,  
 Where now the worm will feed no more;  
 Thy mingled look of love and glee 5  
 When we returned to gaze on thee—

## TO MARY SHELLEY

My dearest Mary, wherefore hast thou gone,  
 And left me in this dreary world alone?  
 Thy form is here indeed,—a lovely one—  
 But thou art fled, gone down the dreary road,  
 That leads to Sorrow's most obscure abode; 5  
 Thou sittest on the hearth of pale despair,

Where

For thine own sake I cannot follow thee.

## TO MARY SHELLEY

The world is dreary,  
 And I'm weary  
 Of wandering on without thee, Mary;  
 A joy was erewhile  
 In thy voice and thy smile, 5  
 And 'tis gone, when I should be gone too, Mary.

ON THE MEDUSA OF LEONARDO DA VINCI IN THE  
FLORENTINE GALLERY

## I

It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky,  
 Upon the cloudy mountain-peak supine;  
 Below, far lands are seen tremblingly;  
 Its horror and its beauty are divine.  
 Upon its lips and eyelids seems to lie 5  
 Loveliness like a shadow, from which shine,  
 Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath,  
 The agonies of anguish and of death.

## II

Yet it is less the horror than the grace  
 Which turns the gazer's spirit into stone, 10  
 Whereon the lineaments of that dead face  
 Are graven, till the characters be grown  
 Into itself, and thought no more can trace;  
 'Tis the melodious hue of beauty thrown  
 Athwart the darkness and the glare of pain, 15  
 Which humanize and harmonize the strain.

## III

And from its head as from one body grow,  
 As grass out of a watery rock,  
 Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow  
 And their long tangles in each other lock, 20  
 And with unending involutions show  
 Their mailèd radiance, as it were to mock  
 The torture and the death within, and saw  
 The solid air with many a ragged jaw.

## IV

And, from a stone beside, a poisonous eft 25  
 Peeps idly into those Gorgonian eyes;  
 Whilst in the air a ghastly bat, bereft  
 Of sense, has flitted with a mad surprise  
 Out of the cave this hideous light had cleft,  
 And he comes hastening like a moth that hies 30  
 After a taper; and the midnight sky  
 Flares, a light more dread than obscurity.

V

'Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror;  
 For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare  
 Kindled by that inextricable error, 35  
 Which makes a thrilling vapour of the air  
 Become a        and ever-shifting mirror  
 Of all the beauty and the terror there—  
 A woman's countenance, with serpent-locks,  
 Gazing in death on Heaven from those wet rocks. 40

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

I

THE fountains mingle with the  
 river  
 And the rivers with the Ocean,  
 The winds of Heaven mix for ever  
 With a sweet emotion:  
 Nothing in the world is single; 5  
 All things by a law divine  
 In one spirit meet and mingle.  
 Why not I with thine?—

II

See the mountains kiss high Heaven  
 And the waves clasp one another;  
 No sister-flower would be for-  
 given 11  
 If it disdained its brother;  
 And the sunlight clasps the earth  
 And the moonbeams kiss the sea:  
 What is all this sweet work worth  
 If thou kiss not me? 16

FRAGMENT: 'FOLLOW TO THE DEEP WOOD'S WEEDS'

|                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FOLLOW to the deep wood's weeds,<br>Follow to the wild-briar dingle,<br>Where we seek to intermingle,<br>And the violet tells her tale | To the odour-scented gale, 5<br>For they two have enough to<br>do<br>Of such work as I and you. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

THE BIRTH OF PLEASURE

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| At the creation of the Earth<br>Pleasure, that divinest birth,<br>From the soil of Heaven did rise,<br>Wrapped in sweet wild melodies—<br>Like an exhalation wreathing 5<br>To the sound of air low-breathing<br>Through Aeolian pines, which make<br>A shade and shelter to the lake | Whence it rises soft and slow;<br>Her life-breathing [limbs] did<br>flow 10<br>In the harmony divine<br>Of an ever-lengthening line<br>Which enwrapped her perfect form<br>With a beauty clear and warm. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

FRAGMENT: LOVE THE UNIVERSE TO-DAY

AND who feels discord now or sorrow?  
 Love is the universe to-day—  
 These are the slaves of dim to-morrow,  
 Darkening Life's labyrinthine way.

FRAGMENT: 'A GENTLE STORY OF TWO LOVERS YOUNG'

A GENTLE story of two lovers young,  
 Who met in innocence and died in sorrow,  
 And of one selfish heart, whose rancour clung  
 Like curses on them; are ye slow to borrow  
 The lore of truth from such a tale? 5  
 Or in this world's deserted vale,  
 Do ye not see a star of gladness  
 Pierce the shadows of its sadness,—  
 When ye are cold, that love is a light sent  
 From Heaven, which none shall quench, to cheer the innocent? 10

FRAGMENT: LOVE'S TENDER ATMOSPHERE

THERE is a warm and gentle atmosphere  
 About the form of one we love, and thus  
 As in a tender mist our spirits are  
 Wrapped in the of that which is to us  
 The health of life's own life— 5

FRAGMENT: WEDDED SOULS

I AM as a spirit who has dwelt  
 Within his heart of hearts, and I have felt  
 His feelings, and have thought his thoughts, and known  
 The inmost converse of his soul, the tone  
 Unheard but in the silence of his blood, 5  
 When all the pulses in their multitude  
 Image the trembling calm of summer seas.  
 I have unlocked the golden melodies  
 Of his deep soul, as with a master-key,  
 And loosened them and bathed myself therein— 10  
 Even as an eagle in a thunder-mist  
 Clothing his wings with lightning.

FRAGMENT: 'IS IT THAT IN SOME BRIGHTER SPHERE'

|                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Is it that in some brighter sphere<br>We part from friends we meet with<br>here?<br>Or do we see the Future pass<br>Over the Present's dusky glass? | Or what is that that makes us<br>seem 5<br>To patch up fragments of a dream,<br>Part of which comes true, and part<br>Beats and trembles in the heart? |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

FRAGMENT: SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY

Is not to-day enough? Why do I peer  
 Into the darkness of the day to come?  
 Is not to-morrow even as yesterday?  
 And will the day that follows change thy doom?

Few flowers grow upon thy wintry way; 5  
 And who waits for thee in that cheerless home  
 Whence thou hast fled, whither thou must return  
 Charged with the load that makes thee faint and mourn?

FRAGMENT: 'YE GENTLE VISITATIONS OF CALM THOUGHT'

Ye gentle visitations of calm thought—  
 Moods like the memories of happier earth,  
 Which come arrayed in thoughts of little worth,  
 Like stars in clouds by the weak winds enwrought,—  
 But that the clouds depart and stars remain, 5  
 While they remain, and ye, alas, depart!

FRAGMENT: MUSIC AND SWEET POETRY

How sweet it is to sit and read the tales  
 Of mighty poets and to hear the while  
 Sweet music, which when the attention fails  
 Fills the dim pause——

FRAGMENT: THE SEPULCHRE OF MEMORY

AND where is truth? On tombs? for such to thee  
 Has been my heart—and thy dead memory  
 Has lain from childhood, many a changeful year,  
 Unchangingly preserved and buried there.

FRAGMENT: 'WHEN A LOVER CLASPS HIS FAIREST'

|                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                      |    |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--|
| I                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                      | II |  |
| WHEN a lover clasps his fairest,<br>Then be our dread sport the rarest.<br>Their caresses were like the chaff<br>In the tempest, and be our laugh<br>His despair—her epitaph! 5 | When a mother clasps her child,<br>Watch till dusty Death has piled<br>His cold ashes on the clay;<br>She has loved it many a day—<br>She remains,—it fades away. 10 |    |  |

FRAGMENT: 'WAKE THE SERPENT NOT'

WAKE the serpent not—lest he  
 Should not know the way to go,—  
 Let him crawl which yet lies sleeping  
 Through the deep grass of the meadow!  
 Not a bee shall hear him creeping, 5  
 Not a may-fly shall awaken  
 From its cradling blue-bell shaken,  
 Not the starlight as he's sliding  
 Through the grass with silent gliding.

## FRAGMENT: RAIN

THE fitful alternations of the rain,  
 When the chill wind, languid as with pain  
 Of its own heavy moisture, here and there  
 Drives through the gray and beamless atmosphere.

## FRAGMENT: A TALE UNTOLD

ONE sung of thee who left the tale untold,  
 Like the false dawns which perish in the bursting;  
 Like empty cups of wrought and daedal gold,  
 Which mock the lips with air, when they are thirsting.

## FRAGMENT: TO ITALY

As the sunrise to the night,  
 As the north wind to the clouds,  
 As the earthquake's fiery flight,  
 Ruining mountain solitudes,  
 Everlasting Italy,  
 Be those hopes and fears on thee.

5

## FRAGMENT: WINE OF THE FAIRIES

I AM drunk with the honey wine  
 Of the moon-unfolded eglantine,  
 Which fairies catch in hyacinth bowls.  
 The bats, the dormice, and the moles  
 Sleep in the walls or under the sword  
 Of the desolate castle yard;  
 And when 'tis split on the summer earth  
 Or its fumes arise among the dew,  
 Their jocund dreams are full of mirth,  
 They gibber their joy in sleep; for few  
 Of the fairies bear those bowls so new!

5

10

## FRAGMENT: A ROMAN'S CHAMBER

## I

IN the cave which wild weeds cover  
 Wait for thine aethereal lover;  
 For the pallid moon is waning,  
 O'er the spiral cypress hanging  
 And the moon no cloud is staining.

5

## II

It was once a Roman's chamber,  
 Where he kept his darkest revels,  
 And the wild weeds twine and clamber;  
 It was then a chasm for devils.

## FRAGMENT: ROME AND NATURE

ROME has fallen, ye see it lying  
 Heaped in undistinguished ruin:  
 Nature is alone undying.

## VARIATION OF THE SONG OF THE MOON

(*Pometheus Unbound*, Act iv.)

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| As a violet's gentle eye<br>Gazes on the azure sky<br>Until its hue grows like what it<br>beholds;<br><br>As a gray and empty mist<br>Lies like solid amethyst      5<br>Over the western mountain it en-<br>folds, | When the sunset sleeps<br>Upon its snow;<br>As a strain of sweetest sound<br>Wraps itself the wind around    10<br><br>Until the voiceless wind be music<br>too;<br>As aught dark, vain, and dull,<br>Basking in what is beautiful,<br>Is full of light and love— |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## CANCELLED STANZA OF THE MASK OF ANARCHY

(FOR WHICH STANZAS LXVIII, LXIX HAVE BEEN SUBSTITUTED.)

FROM the cities where from caves,  
 Like the dead from putrid graves,  
 Troops of starvelings gliding come,  
 Living Tenants of a tomb.

## NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY

SHELLEY loved the People; and respected them as often more virtuous, as always more suffering, and therefore more deserving of sympathy, than the great. He believed that a clash between the two classes of society was inevitable, and he eagerly ranged himself on the people's side. He had an idea of publishing a series of poems adapted expressly to commemorate their circumstances and wrongs. He wrote a few; but, in those days of prosecution for libel, they could not be printed. They are not among the best of his productions, a writer being always shackled when he endeavours to write down to the comprehension of those who could not understand or feel a highly imaginative style; but they show his earnestness, and with what heartfelt compassion he went home to the direct point of injury—that oppression is detestable as being the parent of starvation, nakedness, and ignorance. Besides these outpourings of compassion and indignation, he had meant to adorn the cause he loved with loftier poetry of glory and triumph: such is the scope of the *Ode to the Assertors of Liberty*. He sketched also a new version of our national anthem, as addressed to Liberty.



## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1820

## THE SENSITIVE PLANT

## PART FIRST

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,  
 And the young winds fed it with silver dew,  
 And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,  
 And closed them beneath the kisses of Night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair, 5  
 Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;  
 And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast  
 Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss 10  
 In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,  
 Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want.  
 As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,  
 Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,  
 And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent 15  
 From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,  
 And narcissi, the fairest among them all,  
 Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,  
 Till they die of their own dear loveliness; 20

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,  
 Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale  
 That the light of its tremulous bells is seen  
 Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue, 25  
 Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew  
 Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,  
 It was felt like an odour within the sense;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed, 30  
 Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,  
 Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air  
 The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,  
 As a Maenad its moonlight-coloured cup,  
 Till the fiery star, which is its eye, 35  
 Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,  
 The sweetest flower for scent that blows;  
 And all rare blossoms from every clime  
 Grew in that garden in perfect prime. 40

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom  
 Was pranked, under boughs of embowering blossom,  
 With golden and green light, slanting through  
 Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously, 45  
 And starry river-buds glimmered by,  
 And around them the soft stream did glide and dance  
 With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,  
 Which led through the garden along and across, 50  
 Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,  
 Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells  
 As fair as the fabulous asphodels,  
 And flow'rets which, drooping as day drooped too, 55  
 Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,  
 To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise  
 The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes  
 Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet 60  
 Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,  
 As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,  
 Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one  
 Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun; 65

For each one was interpenetrated  
 With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,  
 Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear  
 Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit 70  
 Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,  
 Received more than all, it loved more than ever,  
 Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver,—

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower;  
Radiance and odour are not its dower; 75  
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,  
It desires what it has not, the Beautiful!

The light winds which from unsustaining wings  
Shed the music of many murmurings;  
The beams which dart from many a star 80  
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar;

The plumèd insects swift and free,  
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,  
Laden with light and odour, which pass  
Over the gleam of the living grass: 85

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie  
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,  
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,  
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide, 90  
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,  
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,  
Move, as reeds in a single stream;

Each and all like ministering angels were  
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear, 95  
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by  
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from Heaven above,  
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,  
And delight, though less bright, was far more deep, 100  
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were drowned  
In an ocean of dreams without a sound;  
Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress  
The light sand which paves it, consciousness; 105

(Only overhead the sweet nightingale  
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,  
And snatches of its Elysian chant  
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant);—

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest 110  
Upgathered into the bosom of rest;  
A sweet child weary of its delight,  
The feeblest and yet the favourite,  
Cradled within the embrace of Night

## PART SECOND

There was a Power in this sweet place,  
 An Eve in this Eden; a ruling Grace  
 Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,  
 Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind, 5  
 Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind  
 Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion  
 Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even:  
 And the meteors of that sublunar Heaven, 10  
 Like the lamps of the air when Night walks forth,  
 Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth!

She had no companion of mortal race,  
 But her tremulous breath and her flushing face  
 Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes, 15  
 That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise:

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake  
 Had deserted Heaven while the stars were awake,  
 As if yet around her he lingering were,  
 Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her. 20

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed;  
 You might hear by the heaving of her breast,  
 That the coming and going of the wind  
 Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her æery footstep trod, 25  
 Her trailing hair from the grassy sod  
 Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,  
 Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet  
 Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet; 30  
 I doubt not they felt the spirit that came  
 From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream  
 On those that were faint with the sunny beam;  
 And out of the cups of the heavy flowers 35  
 She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,  
 And sustained them with rods and osier-bands;  
 If the flowers had been her own infants, she  
 Could never have nursed them more tenderly. 40

- And all killing insects and gnawing worms,  
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,  
She bore, in a basket of Indian woof,  
Into the rough woods far aloof,—
- In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers full, 45  
The freshest her gentle hands could pull  
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,  
Although they did ill, was innocent.
- But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris  
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss 50  
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she  
Make her attendant angels be.
- And many an antenatal tomb,  
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,  
She left clinging round the smooth and dark 55  
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.
- This fairest creature from earliest Spring  
Thus moved through the garden ministering  
All the sweet season of Summertide,  
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died! 60

PART THIRD

- Three days the flowers of the garden fair,  
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,  
Or the waves of Baiae, ere luminous  
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.
- And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant 5  
Felt the sound of the funeral chant,  
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,  
And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low;
- The weary sound and the heavy breath,  
And the silent motions of passing death, 10  
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,  
Sent through the pores of the coffin-plank;
- The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,  
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass;  
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone, 15  
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.
- The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,  
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,  
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,  
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap 20  
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift Summer into the Autumn flowed,  
 And frost in the mist of the morning rode,  
 Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,  
 Mocking the spoil of the secret night. 25

The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,  
 Paved the turf and the moss below.  
 The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,  
 Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue 30  
 The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,  
 Leaf by leaf, day after day,  
 Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and gray, and red,  
 And white with the whiteness of what is dead, 35  
 Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind passed;  
 Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the wingèd seeds,  
 Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,  
 Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem, 40  
 Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet  
 Fell from the stalks on which they were set;  
 And the eddies drove them here and there,  
 As the winds did those of the upper air. 45

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks  
 Were bent and tangled across the walks;  
 And the leafless network of parasite bowers  
 Massed into ruin; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow 50  
 All loathliest weeds began to grow,  
 Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,  
 Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,  
 And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank, 55  
 Stretched out its long and hollow shank,  
 And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,  
 Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,  
 Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue, 60  
 Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and mould  
 Started like mist from the wet ground cold;  
 Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead  
 With a spirit of growth had been animated!

65

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,  
 Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,  
 And at its outlet flags huge as stakes  
 Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,  
 The vapours arose which have strength to kill,  
 At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,  
 At night they were darkness no star could melt.

70

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray  
 Crept and flitted in broad noonday  
 Unseen; every branch on which they alit  
 By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

75

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid,  
 Wept, and the tears within each lid  
 Of its folded leaves, which together grew,  
 Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

80

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon  
 By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;  
 The sap shrank to the root through every pore  
 As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

85

For Winter came: the wind was his whip:  
 One choppy finger was on his lip:  
 He had torn the cataracts from the hills  
 And they clanked at his girdle like manacles;

His breath was a chain which without a sound  
 The earth, and the air, and the water bound;  
 He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne  
 By the tenfold blasts of the Arctic zone.

90

Then the weeds which were forms of living death  
 Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.  
 Their decay and sudden flight from frost  
 Was but like the vanishing of a ghost!

95

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant  
 The moles and the dormice died for want:  
 The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air  
 And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

100

## S H E L L E Y

First there came down a thawing rain  
 And its dull drops froze on the boughs again;  
 Then there steamed up a freezing dew  
 Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew; 105  
 And a northern whirlwind, wandering about  
 Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,  
 Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy, and stiff,  
 And snapped them off with his rigid griff.  
 When Winter had gone and Spring came back 110  
 The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck;  
 But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and darnels,  
 Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

## CONCLUSION

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that 115  
 Which within its boughs like a Spirit sat,  
 Ere its outward form had known decay,  
 Now felt this change, I cannot say.  
 Whether that Lady's gentle mind,  
 No longer with the form combined  
 Which scattered love, as stars do light, 120  
 Found sadness, where it left delight,  
 I dare not guess; but in this life  
 Of error, ignorance, and strife,  
 Where nothing is, but all things seem,  
 And we the shadows of the dream, 125  
 It is a modest creed, and yet  
 Pleasant if one considers it,  
 To own that death itself must be,  
 Like all the rest, a mockery.  
 That garden sweet, that lady fair, 130  
 And all sweet shapes and odours there,  
 In truth have never passed away:  
 'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not they.  
 For love, and beauty, and delight,  
 There is no death nor change: their might 135  
 Exceeds our organs, which endure  
 No light, being themselves obscure.

## A VISION OF THE SEA

'Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail  
 Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale:  
 From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,  
 And when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from Heaven,



She sees the black trunks of the waterspouts spin 5  
 And bend, as if Heaven was ruining in,  
 Which they seemed to sustain with their terrible mass  
 As if ocean had sunk from beneath them: they pass  
 To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,  
 And the waves and the thunders, made silent around, 10  
 Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now tossed  
 Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost  
 In the skirts of the thunder-cloud: now down the sweep  
 Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep  
 It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale 15  
 Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,  
 Dim mirrors of ruin, hang gleaming about;  
 While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout  
 Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron,  
 With splendour and terror the black ship environ, 20  
 Or like sulphur-flakes hurled from a mine of pale fire  
 In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire  
 The pyramid-billows with white points of brine  
 In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,  
 As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea. 25  
 The great ship seems splitting! it cracks as a tree,  
 While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast  
 Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has passed.  
 The intense thunder-balls which are raining from Heaven  
 Have shattered its mast, and it stands black and riven. 30  
 The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk  
 On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,  
 Like a corpse on the clay which is hungering to fold  
 Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,  
 One deck is burst up by the waters below, 35  
 And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow  
 O'er the lakes of the desert! Who sit on the other?  
 Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,  
 Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those  
 Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose, 40  
 In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold;  
 (What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold;)  
 Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,  
 The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank:—  
 Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain 45  
 On the windless expanse of the watery plain,  
 Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,  
 And there seemed to be fire in the beams of the moon,  
 Till a lead-coloured fog gathered up from the deep,  
 Whose breath was quick pestilence; then, the cold sleep 50

Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,  
 O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,  
 With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast  
 Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast  
 Down the deep, which closed on them above and around, 55  
 And the sharks and the dogfish their grave-clothes unbound,  
 And were gluttled like Jews with this manna rained down  
 From God on their wilderness. One after one  
 The mariners died; on the eve of this day,  
 When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array, 60  
 But seven remained. Six the thunder has smitten,  
 And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written  
 His scorn of the embalmer; the seventh, from the deck  
 An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back,  
 And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck. 65  
 No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair  
 Than Heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,  
 It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.  
 She clasps a bright child on her upgathered knee;  
 It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder 70  
 Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder  
 It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near,  
 It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear  
 Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high,  
 The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye, 75  
 While its mother's is lustreless. 'Smile not, my child,  
 But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled  
 Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,  
 So dreadful since thou must divide it with me!  
 Dream, sleep! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed, 80  
 Will it rock thee not, infant? 'Tis beating with dread!  
 Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we,  
 That when the ship sinks we no longer may be?  
 What! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more?  
 To be after life what we have been before? 85  
 Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those eyes,  
 Those lips, and that hair,—all the smiling disguise  
 Thou yet wearest, sweet Spirit, which I, day by day,  
 Have so long called my child, but which now fades away  
 Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower?'—Lo! the ship 90  
 Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip;  
 The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine  
 Crawling inch by inch on them; hair, ears, limbs, and eyne,  
 Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse cry  
 Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously, 95  
 And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,  
 Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,

Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,  
 Hurried on by the might of the hurricane:  
 The hurricane came from the west, and passed on 100  
 By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,  
 Transversely dividing the stream of the storm;  
 As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form  
 Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.  
 Black as a cormorant the screaming blast, 105  
 Between Ocean and Heaven, like an ocean, passed,  
 Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world  
 Which, based on the sea and to Heaven upcurled,  
 Like columns and walls did surround and sustain  
 The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain, 110  
 As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag:  
 And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,  
 Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has passed,  
 Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast;  
 They are scattered like foam on the torrent; and where 115  
 The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air  
 Of clear morning the beams of the sunrise flow in,  
 Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,  
 Banded armies of light and of air, at one gate  
 They encounter, but interpenetrate. 120  
 And that breach in the tempest is widening away,  
 And the caverns of cloud are torn up by the day,  
 And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings,  
 Lulled by the motion and murmurings  
 And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea, 125  
 And overhead glorious, but dreadful to see,  
 The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,  
 Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold  
 The deep calm of blue Heaven dilating above,  
 And, like passions made still by the presence of Love, 130  
 Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide  
 Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide  
 From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,  
 Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with Heaven's azure smile,  
 The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where 135  
 Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay  
 One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray  
 With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle  
 Stain the clear air with sunbows: the jar, and the rattle  
 Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress 140  
 Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness;  
 And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains  
 Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins  
 Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and the splash

As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash 145  
 The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the screams  
 And hissings crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean-streams,  
 Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,  
 A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,  
 The fin-wingèd tomb of the victor. The other 150  
 Is winning his way from the fate of his brother  
 To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat  
 Advances: twelve rowers with the impulse of thought  
 Urge on the keen keel,—the brine foams. At the stern 155  
 Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn  
 In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on  
 To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,—  
 'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,—  
 Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.  
 With her left hand she grasps it impetuously. 160  
 With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,  
 Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere,  
 Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread  
 Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,  
 Like a meteor of light o'er the waters! her child 165  
 Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring; so smiled  
 The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother  
 The child and the ocean still smile on each other,  
 Whilst——

### THE CLOUD

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,  
     From the seas and the streams;  
 I bear light shade for the leaves when laid  
     In their noonday dreams.  
 From my wings are shaken the dews that waken 5  
     The sweet buds every one,  
 When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,  
     As she dances about the sun.  
 I wield the flail of the lashing hail,  
     And whiten the green plains under, 10  
 And then again I dissolve it in rain,  
     And laugh as I pass in thunder.  
  
 I sift the snow on the mountains below,  
     And their great pines groan aghast;  
 And all the night 'tis my pillow white, 15  
     While I sleep in the arms of the blast.  
 Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,  
     Lightning my pilot sits;  
 In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,  
     It struggles and howls at fits; 20

Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,  
This pilot is guiding me,  
Lured by the love of the genii that move  
In the depths of the purple sea;  
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills, 25  
Over the lakes and the plains,  
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,  
The Spirit he loves remains;  
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,  
Whilst he is dissolving in rains. 30

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,  
And his burning plumes outspread,  
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,  
When the morning star shines dead;  
As on the jag of a mountain crag, 35  
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,  
An eagle alit one moment may sit  
In the light of its golden wings.  
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,  
Its ardours of rest and of love, 40  
And the crimson pall of eve may fall  
From the depth of Heaven above,  
With wings folded I rest, on mine aëry nest,  
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden, 45  
Whom mortals call the Moon,  
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,  
By the midnight breezes strewn;  
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,  
Which only the angels hear, 50  
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,  
The stars peep behind her and peer;  
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,  
Like a swarm of golden bees,  
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent, 55  
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,  
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,  
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,  
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl; 60  
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,  
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.  
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,  
Over a torrent sea,  
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,— 65  
The mountains its columns be,

The triumphal arch through which I march  
 With hurricane, fire, and snow,  
 When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,  
 Is the million-coloured bow; 70  
 The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,  
 While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,  
 And the nursling of the Sky;  
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores; 75  
 I change, but I cannot die.  
 For after the rain when with never a stain  
 The pavilion of Heaven is bare,  
 And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams  
 Build up the blue dome of air, 80  
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
 And out of the caverns of rain,  
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,  
 I arise and unbuild it again.

## TO A SKYLARK

HAIL to thee, blithe Spirit!  
 Bird thou never wert,  
 That from Heaven, or near it,  
 Pourest thy full heart  
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art. 5

Higher still and higher  
 From the earth thou springest  
 Like a cloud of fire;  
 The blue deep thou wingest,  
 And singing still dost soar, and  
 soaring ever singest. 10

In the golden lightning  
 Of the sunken sun,  
 O'er which clouds are bright-  
 'ning,  
 Thou dost float and run;  
 Like an unbodied joy whose race is  
 just begun. 15

The pale purple even  
 Melts around thy flight;  
 Like a star of Heaven,  
 In the broad daylight  
 Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy  
 shrill delight, 20

Keen as are the arrows  
 Of that silver sphere,  
 Whose intense lamp narrows  
 In the white dawn clear  
 Until we hardly see—we feel that  
 it is there. 25

All the earth and air  
 With thy voice is loud,  
 As, when night is bare,  
 From one lonely cloud  
 The moon rains out her beams, and  
 Heaven is overflowed. 30

What thou art we know not;  
 What is most like thee?  
 From rainbow clouds there flow  
 not  
 Drops so bright to see  
 As from thy presence showers a  
 rain of melody. 35

Like a Poet hidden  
 In the light of thought,  
 Singing hymns unbidden,  
 Till the world is wrought  
 To sympathy with hopes and fears  
 it heeded not: 40

Like a high-born maiden  
 In a palace-tower,  
 Soothing her love-laden  
 Soul in secret hour  
 With music sweet as love, which  
 overflows her bower: 45

Like a glow-worm golden  
 In a dell of dew,  
 Scattering unbeholden  
 Its æreal hue  
 Among the flowers and grass, which  
 screen it from the view! 50

Like a rose embowered  
 In its own green leaves,  
 By warm winds deflowered,  
 Till the scent it gives  
 Makes faint with too much sweet  
 those heavy-winged  
 thieves:

Sound of vernal showers 56  
 On the twinkling grass,  
 Rain-awakened flowers,  
 All that ever was  
 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy  
 music doth surpass: 60

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,  
 What sweet thoughts are  
 thine:  
 I have never heard  
 Praise of love or wine  
 That panted forth a flood of rap-  
 ture so divine. 65

Chorus Hymeneal,  
 Or triumphal chant,  
 Matched with thine would be all  
 But an empty vaunt,  
 A thing wherein we feel there is  
 some hidden want. 70

What objects are the fountains  
 Of thy happy strain?

What fields, or waves, or moun-  
 tains?  
 What shapes of sky or plain?  
 What love of thine own kind? what  
 ignorance of pain? 75

With thy clear keen joyance  
 Languor cannot be:  
 Shadow of annoyance  
 Never came near thee:  
 Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's  
 sad satiety. 80

Waking or asleep,  
 Thou of death must deem  
 Things more true and deep  
 Than we mortals dream,  
 Or how could thy notes flow in such  
 a crystal stream? 85

We look before and after,  
 And pine for what is not:  
 Our sincerest laughter  
 With some pain is fraught;  
 Our sweetest songs are those that  
 tell of saddest thought. 90

Yet if we could scorn  
 Hate, and pride, and fear;  
 If we were things born  
 Not to shed a tear,  
 I know not how thy joy we ever  
 should come near. 95

Better than all measures  
 Of delightful sound,  
 Better than all treasures  
 That in books are found,  
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner  
 of the ground! 100

Teach me half the gladness  
 That thy brain must know,  
 Such harmonious madness  
 From my lips would flow  
 The world should listen then—as  
 I am listening now. 105

S H E L L E Y  
ODE TO LIBERTY

Yet, Freedom, yet, thy banner, torn but flying,  
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.—BYRON.

I

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again  
The lightning of the nations: Liberty  
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,  
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,  
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay, 5  
And in the rapid plumes of song  
Clothed itself, sublime and strong,  
(As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,)  
Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey;  
Till from its station in the Heaven of fame 10  
The Spirit's whirlwind rapped it, and the ray  
Of the remotest sphere of living flame  
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,  
As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came  
A voice out of the deep: I will record the same. 15

II

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth:  
The burning stars of the abyss were hurled  
Into the depths of Heaven. The daedal earth,  
That island in the ocean of the world,  
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air: 20  
But this divinest universe  
Was yet a chaos and a curse,  
For thou wert not: but, power from worst producing worse,  
The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,  
And of the birds, and of the watery forms, 25  
And there was war among them, and despair  
Within them, raging without truce or terms:  
The bosom of their violated nurse  
Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms on worms,  
And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms. 30

III

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied  
His generations under the pavilion  
Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,  
Temple and prison, to many a swarming million  
Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves. 35  
This human living multitude  
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,  
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,



P O E M S W R I T T E N I N 1 8 2 0

643

Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,  
 Hung Tyranny; beneath, sate deified 40  
 The sister-pest, congregator of slaves;  
 Into the shadow of her pinions wide  
 Anarchs and priests, who feed on gold and blood  
 Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,  
 Drove the astonished herds of men from every side. 45

IV

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,  
 And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves  
 Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles  
 Of favouring Heaven: from their enchanted caves  
 Prophetic echoes flung dim melody. 50  
 On the unapprehensive wild  
 The vine, the corn, the olive mild,  
 Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;  
 And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,  
 Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain, 55  
 Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,  
 Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein  
 Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless child,  
 Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain  
 Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Aegean main 60

V

Athens arose: a city such as vision  
 Builds from the purple crags and silver towers  
 Of battlemented cloud, as in derision  
 Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors  
 Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it; 65  
 Its portals are inhabited  
 By thunder-zonèd winds, each head  
 Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,—  
 A divine work! Athens, diviner yet,  
 Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will 70  
 Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;  
 For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill  
 Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal dead  
 In marble immortality, that hill  
 Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle. 75

VI

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river  
 Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay  
 Immovably unquiet, and for ever  
 It trembles, but it cannot pass away!

The voices of thy bards and sages thunder 80  
 With an earth-awakening blast  
 Through the caverns of the past:  
 (Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:)  
 A wingèd sound of joy, and love, and wonder,  
 Which soars where Expectation never flew, 85  
 Rending the veil of space and time asunder!  
 One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;  
 One Sun illumines Heaven; one Spirit vast  
 With life and love makes chaos ever new,  
 As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew. 90

## VII

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,  
 Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmaean Maenad,<sup>1</sup>  
 She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest  
 From that Elysian food was yet unweanèd;  
 And many a deed of terrible uprightness 95  
 By thy sweet love was sanctified;  
 And in thy smile, and by thy side,  
 Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.  
 But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,  
 And gold profaned thy Capitolian throne, 100  
 Thou didst desert, with spirit-wingèd lightness,  
 The senate of the tyrants: they sunk prone  
 Slaves of one tyrant: Palatinus sighed  
 Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone  
 Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown. 105

## VIII

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,  
 Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,  
 Or utmost islet inaccessible,  
 Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,  
 Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks, 110  
 And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,  
 To talk in echoes sad and stern  
 Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn?  
 For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks  
 Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep. 115  
 What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks  
 Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep,  
 When from its sea of death, to kill and burn,  
 The Galilean serpent forth did creep,  
 And made thy world an undistinguishable heap. 120

<sup>1</sup> See the *Bacchae* of Euripides.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

## IX

A thousand years the Earth cried, 'Where art thou?'  
 And then the shadow of thy coming fell  
 On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow:  
 And many a warrior-peopled citadel,  
 Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep, 125  
     Arose in sacred Italy,  
     Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea  
 Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned majesty;  
     That multitudinous anarchy did sweep  
     And burst around their walls, like idle foam, 130  
     Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep  
     Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb  
 Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,  
     With divine wand traced on our earthly home  
     Fit imagery to pave Heaven's everlasting dome. 135

## X

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror  
 Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,  
 Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-wingèd Error,  
 As light may pierce the clouds when they dis sever  
 In the calm regions of the orient day! 140  
     Luther caught thy wakening glance;  
     Like lightning, from his leaden lance  
 Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance  
     In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;  
     And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen, 145  
     In songs whose music cannot pass away,  
     Though it must flow forever: not unseen  
 Before the spirit-sighted countenance  
     Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene  
     Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien. 150

## XI

The eager hours and reluctant years  
 As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood,  
 Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,  
 Darkening each other with their multitude,  
 And cried aloud, 'Liberty!' Indignation 155  
     Answered Pity from her cave;  
     Death grew pale within the grave,  
 And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save!  
     When like Heaven's Sun girt by the exhalation  
     Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise, 160  
     Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation

Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies  
 At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,  
 Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,  
 Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes. 165

## XII

Thou Heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee then  
 In ominous eclipse? a thousand years  
 Bred from the slime of deep Oppression's den,  
 Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,  
 Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away; 170  
     How like Bacchanals of blood  
     Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood  
 Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood!  
     When one, like them, but mightier far than they,  
     The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers, 175  
     Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,  
     Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers  
 Of serene Heaven. He, by the past pursued,  
 Rests with those dead, but unforgotten hours,  
 Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral towers. 180

## XIII

England yet sleeps: was she not called of old?  
 Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder  
 Vesuvius wakens Aetna, and the cold  
 Snow-crag's by its reply are cloven in sunder:  
 O'er the lit waves every Aeolian isle 185  
     From Pithecusa to Pelorus  
     Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus:  
 They cry, 'Be dim; ye lamps of Heaven suspended o'er us!'  
     Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile  
     And they dissolve; but Spain's were links of steel, 190  
     Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.  
     Twins of a single destiny! appeal  
 To the eternal years enthroned before us  
 In the dim West; impress us from a seal,  
 All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal. 195

## XIV

Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead  
 Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,  
 His soul may stream over the tyrant's head;  
 Thy victory shall be his epitaph,  
 Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine, 200  
     King-deluded Germany,  
     His dead spirit lives in thee.

Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!  
 And thou, lost Paradise of this divine  
 And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness! 205  
 Thou island of eternity! thou shrine  
 Where Desolation, clothed with loveliness,  
 Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,  
 Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress  
 The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces. 210

## XV

Oh, that the free would stamp the impious name  
 Of KING into the dust! or write it there,  
 So that this blot upon the page of fame  
 Were as a serpent's path, which the light air 215  
 Erases, and the flat sands close behind!  
 Ye the oracle have heard:  
 Lift the victory-flashing sword,  
 And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,  
 Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind 220  
 Into a mass, irrefragably firm,  
 The axes and the rods which awe mankind;  
 The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm  
 Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred;  
 Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,  
 To set thine armed heel on this reluctant worm. 225

## XVI

Oh, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle  
 Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,  
 That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and dwindle  
 Into the hell from which it first was hurled,  
 A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure; 230  
 Till human thoughts might kneel alone,  
 Each before the judgment-throne  
 Of its own aweless soul, or of the Power unknown!  
 Oh, that the words which make the thoughts obscure  
 From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew 235  
 From a white lake blot Heaven's blue portraiture,  
 Were stripped of their thin masks and various hue  
 And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,  
 Till in the nakedness of false and true  
 They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due! 240

## XVII

He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever  
 Can be between the cradle and the grave  
 Crowned him the King of Life. Oh, vain endeavour!  
 If on his own high will, a willing slave,

He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor. 245  
     What if earth can clothe and feed  
     Amplest millions at their need,  
 And power in thought be as the tree within the seed?  
     Or what if Art, an ardent intercessor,  
     Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne, 250  
     Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,  
     And cries: 'Give me, thy child, dominion  
 Over all height and depth'? if Life can breed  
     New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan,  
     Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold for one! 255

## XVIII

Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave  
     Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star  
 Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,  
     Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car  
 Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame; 260  
     Comes she not, and come ye not,  
     Rulers of eternal thought,  
 To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportioned lot?  
     Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame  
     Of what has been, the Hope of what will be? 265  
     O Liberty! if such could be thy name  
     Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee:  
 If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought  
     By blood or tears, have not the wise and free  
     Wept tears, and blood like tears?—The solemn harmony 270

## XIX

Paused, and the Spirit of that mighty singing  
     To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;  
 Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging  
     Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,  
 Sinks headlong through the aëreal golden light 275  
     On the heavy-sounding plain,  
     When the bolt has pierced its brain;  
 As summer clouds dissolve, unburthened of their rain;  
     As a far taper fades with fading night,  
     As a brief insect dies with dying day,— 280  
     My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,  
     Drooped; o'er it closed the echoes far away  
 Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,  
     As waves which lately paved his watery way  
     Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play. 285

## TO ———

## I

I FEAR thy kisses, gentle maiden,  
 Thou needest not fear mine;  
 My spirit is too deeply laden  
 Ever to burthen thine.

## II

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion,  
 Thou needest not fear mine;  
 Innocent is the heart's devotion  
 With which I worship thine.

5

## ARETHUSA

## I

ARETHUSA arose  
 From her couch of snows  
 In the Acroceraunian mountains,—  
 From cloud and from crag,  
 With many a jag,  
 5  
 Shepherding her bright fountains.  
 She leapt down the rocks,  
 With her rainbow locks  
 Streaming among the streams;—  
 Her steps paved with green  
 10  
 The downward ravine  
 Which slopes to the western gleams;  
 And gliding and springing  
 She went, ever singing,  
 In murmurs as soft as sleep;  
 15  
 The Earth seemed to love her,  
 And Heaven smiled above her,  
 As she lingered towards the deep.

## II

Then Alpheus bold  
 On his glacier cold,  
 20  
 With his trident the mountains  
 strook;  
 And opened a chasm  
 In the rocks—with the spasm  
 All Erymanthus shook.  
 And the black south wind  
 25  
 It unsealed behind  
 The urns of the silent snow,

And earthquake and thunder  
 Did rend in sunder  
 The bars of the springs below. 30  
 And the beard and the hair  
 Of the River-god were  
 Seen through the torrent's sweep,  
 As he followed the light  
 Of the fleet nymph's flight 35  
 To the brink of the Dorian deep.

## III

'Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!  
 And bid the deep hide me,  
 For he grasps me now by the hair!'  
 The loud Ocean heard,  
 40  
 To its blue depth stirred,  
 And divided at her prayer;  
 And under the water  
 The earth's white daughter  
 Fled like a sunny beam;  
 45  
 Behind her descended  
 Her billows, unblended  
 With the brackish Dorian  
 stream:—  
 Like a gloomy stain  
 On the emerald main 50  
 Alpheus rushed behind,—  
 As an eagle pursuing  
 A dove to its ruin  
 Down the streams of the cloudy  
 wind.

| IV                                   |    | V                                   |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|----|
| Under the bowers                     | 55 | And now from their fountains        |    |
| Where the Ocean Powers               |    | In Enna's mountains,                |    |
| Sit on their pearlèd thrones;        |    | Down one vale where the morning     |    |
| Through the coral woods,             |    | basks,                              | 75 |
| Of the weltering floods,             |    | Like friends once parted            |    |
| Over heaps of unvalued stones; 60    |    | Grown single-hearted,               |    |
| Through the dim beams                |    | They ply their watery tasks.        |    |
| Which amid the streams               |    | At sunrise they leap                |    |
| Weave a network of coloured          |    | From their cradles steep            | 80 |
| light;                               |    | In the cave of the shelving hill;   |    |
| And under the caves,                 |    | At noontide they flow               |    |
| Where the shadowy waves              | 65 | Through the woods below             |    |
| Are as green as the forest's night:— |    | And the meadows of asphodel;        |    |
| Outspeeding the shark,               |    | And at night they sleep             | 85 |
| And the sword-fish dark,             |    | In the rocking deep                 |    |
| Under the Ocean's foam,              |    | Beneath the Ortygian shore;—        |    |
| And up through the rifts             | 70 | Like spirits that lie               |    |
| Of the mountain cliffs               |    | In the azure sky                    |    |
| They passed to their Dorian home.    |    | When they love but live no more. 90 |    |

## SONG OF PROSERPINE

## WHILE GATHERING FLOWERS ON THE PLAIN OF ENNA

## I

SACRED Goddess, Mother Earth,  
 Thou from whose immortal bosom  
 Gods, and men, and beasts have birth,  
 Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom,  
 Breathe thine influence most divine 5  
 On thine own child, Proserpine.

## II

If with mists of evening dew  
 Thou dost nourish these young flowers  
 Till they grow, in scent and hue,  
 Fairest children of the Hours, 10  
 Breathe thine influence most divine  
 On thine own child, Proserpine.

## HYMN OF APOLLO

## I

THE sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,  
 Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries  
 From the broad moonlight of the sky,  
 Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,—



Waken me when their Mother, the gray Dawn,  
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

5

II

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,  
I walk over the mountains and the waves,  
Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam;  
My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves  
Are filled with my bright presence, and the air  
Leaves the green Earth to my embraces bare.

10

III

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill  
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day;  
All men who do or even imagine ill  
Fly me, and from the glory of my ray  
Good minds and open actions take new might,  
Until diminished by the reign of Night.

15

IV

I feed the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers  
With their aethereal colours; the moon's globe  
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers  
Are cinctured with my power as with a robe;  
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine  
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

20

V

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,  
Then with unwilling steps I wander down  
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even;  
For grief that I depart they weep and frown:  
What look is more delightful than the smile  
With which I soothe them from the western isle?

25

30

VI

I am the eye with which the Universe  
Beholds itself and knows itself divine;  
All harmony of instrument or verse,  
All prophecy, all medicine is mine,  
All light of art or nature;—to my song  
Victory and praise in its own right belong.

35

## HYMN OF PAN

## I

FROM the forests and highlands  
 We come, we come;  
 From the river-girt islands,  
 Where loud waves are dumb  
 Listening to my sweet pipings.  
 The wind in the reeds and the  
 rushes, 6  
 The bees on the bells of thyme,  
 The birds on the myrtle bushes,  
 The cicale above in the lime,  
 And the lizards below in the grass,  
 Were as silent as ever old Timolus  
 was, 11  
 Listening to my sweet pipings.

## II

Liquid Peneus was flowing,  
 And all dark Tempe lay  
 In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing 15  
 The light of the dying day,  
 Speeded by my sweet pipings.  
 The Sileni, and Sylvans, and  
 Fauns,  
 And the Nymphs of the woods  
 and the waves,  
 To the edge of the moist river-  
 lawns, 20  
 And the brink of the dewy caves,

And all that did then attend and  
 follow,  
 Were silent with love, as you now,  
 Apollo,  
 With envy of my sweet pip-  
 ings.

## III

I sang of the dancing stars, 25  
 I sang of the daedal Earth,  
 And of Heaven—and the giant  
 wars,  
 And Love, and Death, and  
 Birth,—  
 And then I changed my pip-  
 ings,—  
 Singing how down the vale of Mac-  
 nalus 30  
 I pursued a maiden and clasped  
 a reed.  
 Gods and men, we are all deluded  
 thus!  
 It breaks in our bosom and then  
 we bleed:  
 Ali wept, as I think both ye now  
 would,  
 If envy or age had not frozen your  
 blood,  
 At the sorrow of my sweet  
 pipings.

## THE QUESTION

## I

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,  
 Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring,  
 And gentle odours led my steps astray,  
 Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring  
 Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay  
 Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling  
 Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,  
 But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

## II

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,  
 Daisies, those pearly Arcturi of the earth, 10  
 The constellated flower that never sets;  
 Faint oxslips; tender bluebells, at whose birth  
 The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets —  
 Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth—  
 Its mother's face with Heaven's collected tears, 15  
 When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

## III

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,  
 Green cowbind and the moonlight-coloured may,  
 And cherry-blossoms, and white cups, whose wine  
 Was the bright dew, yet drained not by the day; 20  
 And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,  
 With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray;  
 And flowers azure, black, and streaked with gold,  
 Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

## IV

And nearer to the river's trembling edge 25  
 There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked with white,  
 And starry river buds among the sedge,  
 And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,  
 Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge  
 With moonlight beams of their own watery light; 30  
 And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green  
 As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

## V

Methought that of these visionary flowers  
 I made a nosegay, bound in such a way  
 That the same hues, which in their natural bowers 35  
 Were mingled or opposed, the like array  
 Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours  
 Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,  
 I hastened to the spot whence I had come,  
 That I might there present it!—Oh! to whom? 40

## THE TWO SPIRITS: AN ALLEGORY

*First Spirit.*

O THOU, who plumed with strong desire  
 Wouldst float above the earth, beware!  
 A Shadow tracks thy flight of fire—  
 Night is coming!

Bright are the regions of the air, 5  
And among the winds and beams  
It were delight to wander there—  
Night is coming!

*Second Spirit.*

The deathless stars are bright above;  
If I would cross the shade of night, 10  
Within my heart is the lamp of love,  
And that is day!  
And the moon will smile with gentle light  
On my golden plumes where'er they move;  
The meteors will linger round my flight, 15  
And make night day.

*First Spirit.*

But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken  
Hail, and lightning, and stormy rain;  
See, the bounds of the air are shaken—  
Night is coming! 20  
The red swift clouds of the hurricane  
Yon declining sun have overtaken,  
The clash of the hail sweeps over the plain—  
Night is coming!

*Second Spirit.*

I see the light, and I hear the sound; 25  
I'll sail on the flood of the tempest dark,  
With the calm within and the light around  
Which makes night day:  
And thou, when the gloom is deep and stark,  
Look from thy dull earth, slumber-bound, 30  
My moon-like flight thou then mayst mark  
On high, far away.

---

Some say there is a precipice  
Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin  
O'er piles of snow and chasms of ice 35  
Mid Alpine mountains;  
And that the languid storm pursuing  
That wingèd shape, for ever flies  
Round those hoar branches, aye renewing  
Its aëry fountains. 40

Some say when nights are dry and clear,  
And the death-dews sleep on the morass,  
Sweet whispers are heard by the traveller,

Which make night day:  
 And a silver shape like his early love doth pass 45  
 Upborne by her wild and glittering hair,  
 And when he awakes on the fragrant grass,  
 He finds night day.

ODE TO NAPLES<sup>1</sup>EPODE I *α*

I stood within the City disinterred;<sup>2</sup>  
 And heard the autumnal leaves like light footfalls  
 Of spirits passing through the streets; and heard  
 The Mountain's slumberous voice at intervals  
 Thrill through those roofless halls; 5  
 The oracular thunder penetrating shook  
 The listening soul in my suspended blood;  
 I felt that Earth out of her deep heart spoke—  
 I felt, but heard not:—through white columns glowed  
 The isle-sustaining ocean-flood, 10  
 A plane of light between two heavens of azure!  
 Around me gleamed many a bright sepulchre  
 Of whose pure beauty, Time, as if his pleasure  
 Were to spare Death, had never made erasure;  
 But every living lineament was clear 15  
 As in the sculptor's thought; and there  
 The wreaths of stony myrtle, ivy, and pine,  
 Like winter leaves o'ergrown by moulded snow,  
 Seemed only not to move and grow  
 Because the crystal silence of the air 20  
 Weighed on their life; even as the Power divine  
 Which then lulled all things, brooded upon mine.

EPODE II *α*

Then gentle winds arose  
 With many a mingled close  
 Of wild Aeolian sound, and mountain-odours keen; 25  
 And where the Baian ocean  
 Welters with airlike motion,  
 Within, above, around its bowers of starry green,  
 Moving the sea-flowers in those purple caves,  
 Even as the ever stormless atmosphere 30

<sup>1</sup> The Author has connected many recollections of his visit to Pompeii and Baiae with the enthusiasm excited by the intelligence of the proclamation of a Constitutional Government at Naples. This has given a tinge of picturesque and descriptive imagery to the introductory Epodes which depict these scenes, and some of the majestic feelings permanently connected with the scene of this animating event.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

<sup>2</sup> Pompeii.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Floats o'er the Elysian realm.  
 It bore me, like an Angel, o'er the waves  
 Of sunlight, whose swift pinnace of dewy air  
 No storm can overwhelm.  
 I sailed, where ever flows 35  
 Under the calm Serene  
 A spirit of deep emotion  
 From the unknown graves  
 Of the dead Kings of Melody.<sup>1</sup>  
 Shadowy Aornos darkened o'er the helm 40  
 The horizontal aether; Heaven stripped bare  
 Its depth over Elysium, where the prow  
 Made the invisible water white as snow;  
 From that Typhaean mount, Inarime,  
 There streamed a sunbright vapour, like the standard 45  
 Of some aethereal host;  
 Whilst from all the coast,  
 Louder and louder, gathering round, there wandered  
 Over the oracular woods and divine sea  
 Prophesyings which grew articulate— 50  
 They seize me—I must speak them!—be they fate!

## STROPHE I

Naples! thou Heart of men which ever pantest  
 Naked, beneath the lidless eye of Heaven!  
 Elysian City, which to calm enchantest  
 The mutinous air and sea! they round thee, even 55  
 As sleep round Love, are driven!  
 Metropolis of a ruined Paradise  
 Long lost, late won, and yet but half regained!  
 Bright Altar of the bloodless sacrifice,  
 Which armed Victory offers up unstained 60  
 To Love, the flower-enchained!  
 Thou which wert once, and then didst cease to be,  
 Now art, and henceforth ever shalt be, free,  
 If Hope, and Truth, and Justice can avail,  
 Hail, hail, all hail! 65

## STROPHE II

Thou youngest giant birth  
 Which from the groaning earth  
 Leap'st, clothed in armour of impenetrable scale!  
 Last of the Intercessors!  
 Who 'gainst the Crowned Transgressors 70  
 Pleadest before God's love! Arrayed in Wisdom's mail,  
 Wave thy lightning lance in mirth

<sup>1</sup> Homer and Virgil.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Nor let thy high heart fail,  
 Though from their hundred gates the leagued Oppressors  
 With hurried legions move!  
 Hail, hail, all hail!

75

ANTISTROPHE I  $\alpha$ 

What though Cimmerian Anarchs dare blaspheme  
 Freedom and thee? thy shield is as a mirror  
 To make their blind slaves see, and with fierce gleam  
 To turn his hungry sword upon the wearer;  
 A new Actaeon's error  
 Shall theirs have been—devoured by their own hounds!  
 Be thou like the imperial Basilisk  
 Killing thy foe with unapparent wounds!  
 Gaze on Oppression, till at that dread risk  
 Aghast she pass from the Earth's disk:  
 Fear not, but gaze—for freemen mightier grow,  
 And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe:—  
 If Hope, and Truth, and Justice may avail,  
 Thou shalt be great—All hail!

80

85

90

ANTISTROPHE II  $\alpha$ 

From Freedom's form divine,  
 From Nature's inmost shrine,  
 Strip every impious gawd, rend Error veil by veil;  
 O'er Ruin desolate,  
 O'er Falsehood's fallen state,  
 Sit thou sublime, unawed; be the Destroyer pale!  
 And equal laws be thine,  
 And winged words let sail,  
 Freighted with truth even from the throne of God:  
 That wealth, surviving fate,  
 Be thine.—All hail!

95

100

ANTISTROPHE I  $\beta$ 

Didst thou not start to hear Spain's thrilling paean  
 From land to land re-echoed solemnly,  
 Till silence became music? From the Aeaeon<sup>1</sup>  
 To the cold Alps, eternal Italy  
 Starts to hear thine! The Sea  
 Which paves the desert streets of Venice laughs  
 In light and music; widowed Genoa wan  
 By moonlight spells ancestral epitaphs,  
 Murmuring, 'Where is Doria?' fair Milan,  
 Within whose veins long ran

105

110

<sup>1</sup> Aeaea, the island of Circe.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

The viper's <sup>1</sup> palsyng venom, lifts her heel  
 To bruise his head. The signal and the seal  
 (If Hope and Truth and Justice can avail)  
 Art thou of all these hopes.—O hail! 115

## ANTISTROPHE II β

Florence! beneath the sun,  
 Of cities fairest one,  
 Blushes within her bower for Freedom's expectation:  
 From eyes of quenchless hope  
 Rome tears the priestly cope, 120  
 As ruling once by power, so now by admiration,—  
 An athlete stripped to run  
 From a remoter station  
 For the high prize lost on Philippi's shore:—  
 As then Hope, Truth, and Justice did avail, 125  
 So now may Fraud and Wrong! O hail!

## EPODE I β

Hear ye the march as of the Earth-born Forms  
 Arrayed against the ever-living Gods?  
 The crash and darkness of a thousand storms  
 Bursting their inaccessible abodes 130  
 Of crags and thunder-clouds?  
 See ye the banners blazoned to the day,  
 Inwrought with emblems of barbaric pride?  
 Dissonant threats kill Silence far away,  
 The serene Heaven which wraps our Eden wide 135  
 With iron light is dyed;  
 The Anarchs of the North lead forth their legions  
 Like Chaos o'er creation, uncreating;  
 An hundred tribes nourished on strange religions  
 And lawless slaveries,—down the aëreal regions 140  
 Of the white Alps, desolating,  
 Famished wolves that bide no waiting,  
 Blotting the glowing footsteps of old glory,  
 Trampling our columned cities into dust,  
 Their dull and savage lust 145  
 On Beauty's corse to sickness satiating—  
 They come! The fields they tread look black and hoary  
 With fire—from their red feet the streams run gory!

## EPODE II β

Great Spirit, deepest Love!  
 Which rulest and dost move 150

<sup>1</sup> The viper was the armorial device of the Visconti, tyrants of Milan.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]



All things which live and are, within the Italian shore;  
 Who spreadest Heaven around it,  
 Whose woods, rocks, waves, surround it;  
 Who sittest in thy star, o'er Ocean's western floor;  
 Spirit of beauty! at whose soft command 155  
 The sunbeams and the showers distil its foison  
 From the Earth's bosom chill;  
 Oh, bid those beams be each a blinding brand  
 Of lightning! bid those showers be dews of poison!  
 Bid the Earth's plenty kill! 160  
 Bid thy bright Heaven above,  
 Whilst light and darkness bound it,  
 Be their tomb who planned  
 To make it ours and thine!  
 Or, with thine harmonizing ardours fill 165  
 And raise thy sons, as o'er the prone horizon  
 Thy lamp feeds every twilight wave with fire—  
 Be man's high hope and unextinct desire  
 The instrument to work thy will divine!  
 Then clouds from sunbeams, antelopes from leopards, 170  
 And frowns and fears from thee,  
 Would not more swiftly flee  
 Than Celtic wolves from the Ausonian shepherds.—  
 Whatever, Spirit, from thy starry shrine  
 Thou yielddest or withholdest, oh, let be 175  
 This city of thy worship ever free!

# AUTUMN: A DIRGE

## I

THE warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,  
 The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying,  
 And the Year  
 On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,  
 Is lying. 5  
 Come, Months, come away,  
 From November to May,  
 In your saddest array;  
 Follow the bier  
 Of the dead cold Year, 16  
 And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

## II

The chill rain is falling, the nipped worm is crawling,  
 The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling  
 For the Year;  
 The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone 15

## S H E L L E Y

To his dwelling;  
 Come, Months, come away;  
 Put on white, black, and gray;  
 Let your light sisters play—  
 Ye, follow the bier 20  
 Of the dead cold Year,  
 And make her grave green with tear on tear.

## THE WANING MOON

AND like a dying lady, lean and pale,  
 Who totters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil,  
 Out of her chamber, led by the insane  
 And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,  
 The moon arose up in the murky East, 5  
 A white and shapeless mass—

## TO THE MOON

## I

ART thou pale for weariness  
 Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,  
 Wandering companionless  
 Among the stars that have a different birth,—  
 And ever changing, like a joyless eye 5  
 That finds no object worth its constancy?

## II

Thou chosen sister of the Spirit,  
 That gazes on thee till in thee it pities . . .

## DEATH

## I

DEATH is here and death is there,  
 Death is busy everywhere,  
 All around, within, beneath,  
 Above is death—and we are death.

## II

Death has set his mark and  
 seal 5  
 On all we are and all we feel,  
 On all we know and all we fear,  
 . . .

## III

First our pleasures die—and then  
 Our hopes, and then our fears—  
 and when  
 These are dead, the debt is due, 10  
 Dust claims dust—and we die too.

## IV

All things that we love and cherish,  
 Like ourselves must fade and per-  
 ish;  
 Such is our rude mortal lot—  
 Love itself would, did they not. 15

## LIBERTY

## I

THE fiery mountains answer each other;  
 Their thunderings are echoed from zone to zone;  
 The tempestuous oceans awake one another,  
 And the ice-rocks are shaken round Winter's throne,  
 When the clarion of the Typhoon is blown. 5

## II

From a single cloud the lightening flashes,  
 Whilst a thousand isles are illumined around,  
 Earthquake is trampling one city to ashes,  
 An hundred are shuddering and tottering; the sound  
 Is bellowing underground. 10

## III

But keener thy gaze than the lightening's glare,  
 And swifter thy step than the earthquake's tramp;  
 Thou deafenest the rage of the ocean; thy stare  
 Makes blind the volcanoes; the sun's bright lamp  
 To thine is a fen-fire damp. 15

## IV

From billow and mountain and exhalation  
 The sunlight is darted through vapour and blast;  
 From spirit to spirit, from nation to nation,  
 From city to hamlet thy dawning is cast,—  
 And tyrants and slaves are like shadows of night  
 In the van of the morning light. 20

## SUMMER AND WINTER

It was a bright and cheerful afternoon,  
 Towards the end of the sunny month of June,  
 When the north wind congregates in crowds  
 The floating mountains of the silver clouds  
 From the horizon—and the stainless sky 5  
 Opens beyond them like eternity.  
 All things rejoiced beneath the sun; the weeds,  
 The river, and the corn-fields, and the reeds;  
 The willow leaves that glanced in the light breeze,  
 And the firm foliage of the larger trees. 10

It was a winter such as when birds die  
 In the deep forests; and the fishes lie

Stiffened in the translucent ice, which makes  
 Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes  
 A wrinkled clod as hard as brick; and when, 15  
 Among their children, comfortable men  
 Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold:  
 Alas, then, for the homeless beggar old!

### THE TOWER OF FAMINE

AMID the desolation of a city,  
 Which was the cradle, and is now the grave  
 Of an extinguished people,—so that Pity  
 Weeps o'er the shipwrecks of Oblivion's wave,  
 There stands the Tower of Famine. It is built 5  
 Upon some prison-homes, whose dwellers rave  
 For bread, and gold, and blood: Pain, linked to Guilt,  
 Agitates the light flame of their hours,  
 Until its vital oil is spent or spilt.  
 There stands the pile, a tower amid the towers 10  
 And sacred domes; each marble-ribbed roof,  
 The brazen-gated temples, and the bowers  
 Of solitary wealth,—the tempest-proof  
 Pavilions of the dark Italian air,—  
 Are by its presence dimmed—they stand aloof, 15  
 And are withdrawn—so that the world is bare;  
 As if a spectre wrapped in shapeless terror  
 Amid a company of ladies fair  
 Should glide and glow, till it became a mirror  
 Of all their beauty, and their hair and hue, 20  
 The life of their sweet eyes, with all its error,  
 Should be absorbed, till they to marble grew.

### AN ALLEGORY

#### I

A PORTAL as of shadowy adamant  
 Stands yawning on the highway of the life  
 Which we all tread, a cavern huge and gaunt;  
 Around it rages an unceasing strife  
 Of shadows, like the restless clouds that haunt 5  
 The gap of some cleft mountain, lifted high  
 Into the whirlwinds of the upper sky.

## II

And many pass it by with careless tread,  
 Not knowing that a shadowy . . .  
 Tracks every traveller even to where the dead 10  
 Wait peacefully for their companion new;  
 But others, by more curious humour led,  
 Pause to examine;—these are very few,  
 And they learn little there, except to know  
 That shadows follow them where'er they go. 15

## THE WORLD'S WANDERERS

## I

TELL me, thou Star, whose wings of light  
 Speed thee in thy fiery flight,  
 In what cavern of the night  
 Will thy pinions close now?

## II

Tell me, Moon, thou pale and gray 5  
 Pilgrim of Heaven's homeless way,  
 In what depth of night or day  
 Seekest thou repose now?

## III

Weary Wind, who wanderest  
 Like the world's rejected guest, 10  
 Hast thou still some secret nest  
 On the tree or billow?

## SONNET

YE hasten to the grave! What seek ye there,  
 Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes  
 Of the idle brain, which the world's livery wear?  
 O thou quick heart, which pantest to possess 5  
 All that pale Expectation feigneth fair!  
 Thou vainly curious mind which wouldest guess  
 Whence thou didst come, and whither thou must go,  
 And all that never yet was known would know—  
 Oh, whither hasten ye, that thus ye press,  
 With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path, 10  
 Seeking, alike from happiness and woe,  
 A refuge in the cavern of gray death?  
 O heart, and mind, and thoughts! what thing do you  
 Hope to inherit in the grave below?

## LINES TO A REVIEWER

ALAS, good friend, what profit can you see  
 In hating such a hateless thing as me?  
 There is no sport in hate where all the rage  
 Is on one side: in vain would you assuage  
 Your frowns upon an unresisting smile, 5  
 In which not even contempt lurks to beguile  
 Your heart, by some fain sympathy of hate.  
 Oh, conquer what you cannot satiate!  
 For to your passion I am far more coy  
 Than ever yet was coldest maid or boy 10  
 In winter noon. Of your antipathy  
 If I am the Narcissus, you are free  
 To pine into a sound with hating me.

## FRAGMENT OF A SATIRE ON SATIRE

IF gibbets, axes, confiscations, chains,  
 And racks of subtle torture, if the pains  
 Of shame, of fiery Hell's tempestuous wave,  
 Seen through the caverns of the shadowy grave,  
 Hurling the damned into the murky air 5  
 While the meek blest sit smiling; if Despair  
 And Hate, the rapid bloodhounds with which Terror  
 Hunts through the world the homeless steps of Error,  
 Are the true secrets of the commonweal  
 To make men wise and just; . . . 10  
 And not the sophisms of revenge and fear,  
 Bloodier than is revenge . . .  
 Then send the priests to every hearth and home  
 To preach the burning wrath which is to come,  
 In words like flakes of sulphur, such as thaw 15  
 The frozen tears . . .  
 If Satire's scourge could wake the slumbering hounds  
 Of Conscience, or erase the deeper wounds,  
 The leprous scars of callous Infamy;  
 If it could make the present not to be, 20  
 Or charm the dark past never to have been,  
 Or turn regret to hope; who that has seen  
 What Southey is and was, would not exclaim,  
 'Lash on!' be the keen verse dipped in flame;  
 Follow his flight with wingèd words, and urge 25  
 The strokes of the inexorable scourge  
 Until the heart be naked, till his soul  
 See the contagion's spots foul;  
 And from the mirror of Truth's sunlike shield,

From which his Parthian arrow . . .  
Flash on his sight the spectres of the past,  
Until his mind's eye paint thereon—  
Let scorn like                      yawn below,  
And rain on him like flakes of fiery snow.  
This cannot be, it ought not, evil still—  
Suffering makes suffering, ill must follow ill.  
Rough words beget sad thoughts,                  and, beside,  
Men take a sullen and a stupid pride  
In being all they hate in others' shame,  
By a perverse antipathy of fame.  
'Tis not worth while to prove, as I could, how  
From the sweet fountains of our Nature flow  
These bitter waters; I will only say,  
If any friend would take Southey some day,  
And tell him, in a country walk alone,  
Softening harsh words with friendship's gentle tone,  
How incorrect his public conduct is,  
And what men think of it, 'twere not amiss.  
Far better than to make innocent ink—

GOOD-NIGHT

I

GOOD-NIGHT? ah! no; the hour is ill  
Which severs those it should unite;  
Let us remain together still,  
Then it will be *good* night.

## II

How can I call the lone night good,  
 Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight?  
 Be it not said, thought, understood—  
 Then it will be—*good* night.

### III

To hearts which near each other move  
From evening close to morning light,  
The night is good; because, my love,  
They never *say* good-night.

10

BUONA NOTTE

I

‘BUONA notte, buona notte!’—Come mai  
La notte sarà buona senza te?  
Non dirmi buona notte,—chè tu sai,  
La notte sà star buona da per sè.

## II

Solinga, scura, cupa, senza speme, 5  
 La notte quando Lilla m'abbandona;  
 Pei cuori chi si batton insieme  
 Ogni notte, senza dirla, sarà buona.

## III

Come male buona notte si suona 10  
 Con sospiri e parole interrotte!—  
 Il modo di aver la notte buona  
 E mai non di dir la buona notte.

## ORPHEUS

A. Not far from hence. From yonder pointed hill,  
 Crowned with a ring of oaks, you may behold  
 A dark and barren field, through which there flows,  
 Sluggish and black, a deep but narrow stream,  
 Which the wind ripples not, and the fair moon 5  
 Gazes in vain, and finds no mirror there.  
 Follow the herbless banks of that strange brook  
 Until you pause beside a darksome pond,  
 The fountain of this rivulet, whose gush  
 Cannot be seen, hid by a rayless night 10  
 That lives beneath the overhanging rock  
 That shades the pool—an endless spring of gloom,  
 Upon whose edge hovers the tender light,  
 Trembling to mingle with its paramour,—  
 But, as Syrinx fled Pan, so night flies day, 15  
 Or, with most sullen and regardless hate,  
 Refuses stern her heaven-born embrace.  
 On one side of this jagged and shapeless hill  
 There is a cave, from which there eddies up  
 A pale mist, like aëreal gossamer, 20  
 Whose breath destroys all life—awhile it veils  
 The rock—then, scattered by the wind, it flies  
 Along the stream, or lingers on the clefts,  
 Killing the sleepy worms, if aught bide there.  
 Upon the beetling edge of that dark rock 25  
 There stands a group of cypresses; not such  
 As, with a graceful spire and stirring life,  
 Pierce the pure heaven of your native vale,  
 Whose branches the air plays among, but not  
 Disturbs, fearing to spoil their solemn grace; 30  
 But blasted and all wearily they stand,  
 One to another clinging; their weak boughs  
 Sigh as the wind buffets them, and they shake



Beneath its blasts—a weatherbeaten crew!

*Chorus.* What wondrous sound is that, mournful and faint, 35  
But more melodious than the murmuring wind  
Which through the columns of a temple glides?

*A.* It is the wandering voice of Orpheus' lyre,  
Borne by the winds, who sigh that their rude king 40  
Hurries them fast from these air-feeding notes;  
But in their speed they bear along with them  
The waning sound, scattering it like dew  
Upon the startled sense.

*Chorus.* Does he still sing?  
Methought he rashly cast away his harp  
When he had lost Eurydice.

*A.* Ah, no! 45  
Awhile he paused. As a poor hunted stag  
A moment shudders on the fearful brink  
Of a swift stream—the cruel hounds press on  
With deafening yell, the arrows glance and wound,—  
He plunges in: so Orpheus, seized and torn 50  
By the sharp fangs of an insatiate griet,  
Maenad-like waved his lyre in the bright air,  
And wildly shrieked 'Where she is, it is dark!'  
And then he struck from forth the strings a sound  
Of deep and fearful melody. Alas! 55  
In times long past, when fair Eurydice  
With her bright eyes sat listening by his side,  
He gently sang of high and heavenly themes.  
As in a brook, fretted with little waves  
By the light airs of spring—each riplet makes 60  
A many-sided mirror for the sun,  
While it flows musically through green banks,  
Ceaseless and pauseless, ever clear and fresh,  
So flowed his song, reflecting the deep joy  
And tender love that fed those sweetest notes, 65  
The heavenly offspring of ambrosial food.  
But that is past. Returning from drear Hell,  
He chose a lonely seat of unhewn stone,  
Blackened with lichens, a herbless plain.  
Then from the deep and overflowing spring 70  
Of his eternal ever-moving grief  
There rose to Heaven a sound of angry song.  
'Tis a mighty cataract that parts  
Two sister rocks with waters swift and strong,  
And casts itself with horrid roar and din 75  
Adown a steep; from a perennial source  
It ever flows and falls, and breaks the air  
With loud and fierce, but most harmonious roar,

And as it falls casts up a vaporous spray  
 Which the sun clothes in hues of Iris light. 80  
 Thus the tempestuous torrent of his grief  
 Is clothed in sweetest sounds and varying words  
 Of poesy. Unlike all human works,  
 It never slackens, and through every change  
 Wisdom and beauty and the power divine 85  
 Of mighty poesy together dwell,  
 Mingling in sweet accord. As I have seen  
 A fierce south blast tear through the darkened sky,  
 Driving along a rack of wingèd clouds,  
 Which may not pause, but ever hurry on, 90  
 As their wild shepherd wills them, while the stars,  
 Twinkling and dim, peep from between the plumes.  
 Anon the sky is cleared, and the high dome  
 Of serene Heaven, starred with fiery flowers,  
 Shuts in the shaken earth; or the still moon 95  
 Swiftly, yet gracefully, begins her walk,  
 Rising all bright behind the eastern hills.  
 I talk of moon, and wind, and stars, and not  
 Of song; but, would I echo his high song,  
 Nature must lend me words ne'er used before, 100  
 Or I must borrow from her perfect works,  
 To picture forth his perfect attributes.  
 He does no longer sit upon his throne  
 Of rock upon a desert herbless plain,  
 For the evergreen and knotted ilexes, 105  
 And cypresses that seldom wave their boughs,  
 And sea-green olives with their grateful fruit,  
 And elms dragging along the twisted vines,  
 Which drop their berries as they follow fast,  
 And blackthorn bushes with their infant race 110  
 Of blushing rose-blooms; beeches, to lovers dear,  
 And weeping willow trees; all swift or slow,  
 As their huge boughs or lighter dress permit,  
 Have circled in his throne, and Earth herself  
 Has sent from her maternal breast a growth 115  
 Of starlike flowers and herbs of odour sweet,  
 To pave the temple that his poesy  
 Has framed, while near his feet grim lions couch,  
 And kids, fearless from love, creep near his lair.  
 Even the blind worms seem to feel the sound. 120  
 The birds are silent, hanging down their heads,  
 Perched on the lowest branches of the trees;  
 Not even the nightingale intrudes a note  
 In rivalry, but all entranced she listens.

## FIORDISPINA

- THE season was the childhood of sweet June,  
 Whose sunny hours from morning until noon  
 Went creeping through the day with silent feet,  
 Each with its load of pleasure; slow yet sweet;  
 Like the long years of blest Eternity 5  
 Never to be developed. Joy to thee,  
 Fiordispina and thy Cosimo,  
 For thou the wonders of the depth canst know  
 Of this unfathomable flood of hours,  
 Sparkling beneath the heaven which embowers— 10  
 . . . . .
- They were two cousins, almost like to twins,  
 Except that from the catalogue of sins  
 Nature had rased their love—which could not be  
 But by dissevering their nativity.  
 And so they grew together like two flowers 15  
 Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers  
 Lull or awaken in their purple prime,  
 Which the same hand will gather—the same clime  
 Shake with decay. This fair day smiles to see  
 All those who love—and who e'er loved like thee, 20  
 Fiordispina? Scarcely Cosimo,  
 Within whose bosom and whose brain now glow  
 The ardours of a vision which obscure  
 The very idol of its portraiture.  
 He faints, dissolved into a sea of love; 25  
 But thou art as a planet sphered above;  
 But thou art Love itself—ruling the motion  
 Of his subjected spirit: such emotion  
 Must end in sin and sorrow, if sweet May  
 Had not brought forth this morn—your wedding-day. 30  
 . . . . .
- 'Lie there; sleep awhile in your own dew,  
 Ye faint-eyed children of the Hours,'  
 Fiordispina said, and threw the flowers  
 Which she had from the breathing—  
 . . . . .
- A table near of polished porphyry. 35  
 They seemed to wear a beauty from the eye  
 That looked on them—a fragrance from the touch  
 Whose warmth checked their life; a light such  
 As sleepers wear, lulled by the voice they love,  
 which did reprove 40

The childish pity that she felt for them,  
 And a remorse that from their stem  
 She had divided such fair shapes made  
 A feeling in the which was a shade  
 Of gentle beauty on the flowers: there lay 45  
 All gems that make the earth's dark bosom gay.  
                   rods of myrtle-buds and lemon-blooms,  
 And that leaf tinted lightly which assumes  
 The livery of unremembered snow—  
 Violets whose eyes have drunk— 50

Fiordispina and her nurse are now  
 Upon the steps of the high portico;  
 Under the withered arm of Media  
 She flings her glowing arm

                  step by step and stair by stair, 55  
 That withered woman, gray and white and brown—  
 More like a trunk by lichens overgrown  
 Than anything which once could have been human.  
 And ever as she goes the palsied woman

‘How slow and painfully you seem to walk,  
 Poor Media! you tire yourself with talk.’ 60

                  ‘And well it may,  
 Fiordispina, dearest—well-a-day!  
 You are hastening to a marriage-bed;  
 I to the grave!’—‘And if my love were dead, 65  
 Unless my heart deceives me, I would lie  
 Beside him in my shroud as willingly  
 As now in the gay night-dress Lilla wrought.’

‘Fie, child! Let that unseasonable thought  
 Not be remembered till it snows in June; 70  
 Such fancies are a music out of tune

With the sweet dance your heart must keep to-night.  
 What! would you take all beauty and delight  
 Back to the Paradise from which you sprung,  
 And leave to grosser mortals?— 75

And say, sweet lamb, would you not learn the sweet  
 And subtle mystery by which spirits meet?  
 Who knows whether the loving game is played,  
 When, once of mortal [vesture] disarrayed,  
 The naked soul goes wandering here and there 80  
 Through the wide deserts of Elysian air?  
 The violet dies not till it’—

## TIME LONG PAST

## I

LIKE the ghost of a dear friend  
dead

Is Time long past.

A tone which is now forever fled,  
A hope which is now forever past,  
A love so sweet it could not last, 5

Was time long past.

## II

There were sweet dreams in the  
night

Of Time long past:

And, was it sadness or delight,  
Each day a shadow onward cast 10  
Which made us wish it yet might  
last—

That Time long past.

## III

There is regret, almost remorse,  
For Time long past.

'Tis like a child's beloved corse 15  
A father watches, till at last  
Beauty is like remembrance, cast  
From Time long past.

## FRAGMENT: THE DESERTS OF DIM SLEEP

I WENT into the deserts of dim sleep—

That world which, like an unknown wilderness,  
Bounds this with its recesses wide and deep—

FRAGMENT: 'THE VIEWLESS AND INVISIBLE  
CONSEQUENCE'

THE viewless and invisible Consequence  
Watches thy goings-out, and comings-in,  
And . . . hovers o'er thy guilty sleep,  
Unveiling every new-born deed, and thoughts  
More ghastly than those deeds— 5

## FRAGMENT: A SERPENT-FACE

HIS face was like a snake's—wrinkled and loose  
And withered—

## FRAGMENT: DEATH IN LIFE

My head is heavy, my limbs are weary,  
And it is not life that makes me move.

FRAGMENT: 'SUCH HOPE, AS IS THE SICK  
DESPAIR OF GOOD'

SUCH hope, as is the sick despair of good,  
Such fear, as is the certainty of ill,  
Such doubt, as is pale Expectation's food  
Turned while she tastes to poison, when the will  
Is powerless, and the spirit . . . 5

FRAGMENT: 'ALAS! THIS IS NOT WHAT  
I THOUGHT LIFE WAS'

ALAS! this is not what I thought life was.  
I knew that there were crimes and evil men,  
Misery and hate; nor did I hope to pass  
Untouched by suffering, through the rugged glen.  
In mine own heart I saw as in a glass  
The hearts of others                      And when  
I went among my kind, with triple brass  
Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed,  
To bear scorn, fear, and hate, a woful mass!

5

FRAGMENT: MILTON'S SPIRIT

I DREAMED that Milton's spirit rose, and took  
From life's green tree his Uranian lute;  
And from his touch sweet thunder flowed, and shook  
All human things built in contempt of man,—  
And sanguine thrones and impious altars quaked,  
Prisons and citadels . . .

5

FRAGMENT: 'UNRISEN SPLENDOUR OF THE  
BRIGHTEST SUN'

UNRISEN splendour of the brightest sun,  
To rise upon our darkness, if the star  
Now beckoning thee out of thy misty throne  
Could thaw the clouds which wage an obscure war  
With thy young brightness!

5

FRAGMENT: *PATER OMNIPOTENS*

SERENE in his unconquerable might  
Endued[,] the Almighty King, his steadfast throne  
Encompassed unapproachably with power  
And darkness and deep solitude and awe  
Stood like a black cloud on some aëry cliff  
Embosoming its lightning—in his sight  
Unnumbered glorious spirits trembling stood  
Like slaves before their Lord—prostrate around  
Heaven's multitudes hymned everlasting praise.

5

FRAGMENT: TO THE MIND OF MAN

THOU living light that in thy rainbow hues  
Clothest this naked world; and over Sea  
And Earth and air, and all the shapes that be  
In peopled darkness of this wondrous world

|                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| The Spirit of thy glory dost diffuse                | 5  |
| truth      thou Vital Flame                         |    |
| Mysterious thought that in this mortal frame        |    |
| Of things, with unextinguished lustre burnest       |    |
| Now pale and faint now high to Heaven upcurled      |    |
| That e'er as thou dost languish still returnest     | 10 |
| And ever                                            |    |
| Before the      before the Pyramids                 |    |
| So soon as from the Earth formless and rude         |    |
| One living step had chased drear Solitude           |    |
| Thou wert, Thought; thy brightness charmed the lids | 15 |
| Of the vast snake Eternity, who kept                |    |
| The tree of good and evil.—                         |    |

## NOTE ON POEMS OF 1820, BY MRS. SHELLEY

WE spent the latter part of the year 1819 in Florence, where Shelley passed several hours daily in the Gallery, and made various notes on its ancient works of art. His thoughts were a good deal taken up also by the project of a steamboat, undertaken by a friend, an engineer, to ply between Leghorn and Marseilles, for which he supplied a sum of money. This was a sort of plan to delight Shelley, and he was greatly disappointed when it was thrown aside.

There was something in Florence that disagreed excessively with his health, and he suffered far more pain than usual; so much so that we left it sooner than we intended, and removed to Pisa, where we had some friends, and, above all, where we could consult the celebrated Vaccà as to the cause of Shelley's sufferings. He, like every other medical man, could only guess at that, and gave little hope of immediate relief; he enjoined him to abstain from all physicians and medicine, and to leave his complaint to Nature. As he had vainly consulted medical men of the highest repute in England, he was easily persuaded to adopt this advice. Pain and ill-health followed him to the end; but the residence at Pisa agreed with him better than any other, and there in consequence we remained.

In the Spring we spent a week or two near Leghorn, borrowing the house of some friends who were absent on a journey to England. It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering among the lanes whose myrtle-hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems. He addressed the letter to Mrs. Gisborne from this house, which was hers: he had made his study of the workshop of her son, who was an engineer. Mrs. Gisborne had been a friend of my father in her younger days. She was a lady of great accomplishments, and charming from her frank and affectionate nature. She had the most intense love of knowledge, a delicate and trembling sensibility, and preserved freshness of mind after a life

of considerable adversity. As a favourite friend of my father, we had sought her with eagerness; and the most open and cordial friendship was established between us.

Our stay at the Baths of San Giuliano was shortened by an accident. At the foot of our garden ran the canal that communicated between the Serchio and the Arno. The Serchio overflowed its banks, and, breaking its bounds, this canal also overflowed; all this part of the country is below the level of its rivers, and the consequence was that it was speedily flooded. The rising waters filled the Square of the Baths, in the lower part of which our house was situated. The canal overflowed in the garden behind; the rising waters on either side at last burst open the doors, and, meeting in the house, rose to the height of six feet. It was a picturesque sight at night to see the peasants driving the cattle from the plains below to the hills above the Baths. A fire was kept up to guide them across the ford; and the forms of the men and the animals showed in dark relief against the red glare of the flame, which was reflected again in the waters that filled the Square.

We then removed to Pisa, and took up our abode there for the winter. The extreme mildness of the climate suited Shelley, and his solitude was enlivened by an intercourse with several intimate friends. Chance cast us strangely enough on this quiet half-unpeopled town; but its very peace suited Shelley. Its river, the near mountains, and not distant sea, added to its attractions, and were the objects of many delightful excursions. We feared the south of Italy, and a hotter climate, on account of our child; our former bereavement inspiring us with terror. We seemed to take root here, and moved little afterwards; often, indeed, entertaining projects for visiting other parts of Italy, but still delaying. But for our fears on account of our child, I believe we should have wandered over the world, both being passionately fond of travelling. But human life, besides its great unalterable necessities, is ruled by a thousand lilliputian ties that shackle at the time, although it is difficult to account afterwards for their influence over our destiny.

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1821

### DIRGE FOR THE YEAR

#### I

ORPHAN Hours, the Year is dead,  
Come and sigh, come and weep!  
Merry Hours, smile instead,  
For the Year is but asleep.  
See, it smiles as it is sleeping, 5  
Mocking your untimely weep-  
ing.

#### II

As an earthquake rocks a corse  
In its coffin in the clay,  
So White Winter, that rough nurse,  
Rocks the death-cold Year to-  
day; 10  
Solemn Hours! wail aloud  
For your mother in her shroud.



## III

As the wild air stirs and sways  
 The tree-swung cradle of a  
 child,  
 So the breath of these rude days 15  
 Rocks the Year:—be calm and  
 mild,  
 Trembling Hours, she will arise  
 With new love within her eyes.

## IV

January gray is here,  
 Like a sexton by her grave; 20  
 February bears the bier,  
 March with grief doth howl and  
 rave,  
 And April weeps—but, O ye  
 Hours!  
 Follow with May's fairest flowers.

## TO NIGHT

## I

SWIFTLY walk o'er the western  
 wave,  
 Spirit of Night!  
 Out of the misty eastern cave,  
 Where, all the long and lone day-  
 light,  
 Thou wovest dreams of joy and  
 fear, 5  
 Which make thee terrible and  
 dear,—  
 Swift be thy flight!

## II

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,  
 Star-inwrought!  
 Blind with thine hair the eyes of  
 Day; 10  
 Kiss her until she be wearied out,  
 Then wander o'er city, and sea, and  
 land,  
 Touching all with thine opiate  
 wand—  
 Come, long-sought!

## III

When I arose and saw the dawn, 15  
 I sighed for thee;

When light rode high, and the dew  
 was gone,  
 And noon lay heavy on flower and  
 tree,  
 And the weary Day turned to his  
 rest,  
 Lingering like an unloved guest, 20  
 I sighed for thee.

## IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,  
 Wouldst thou me?  
 Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-  
 eyed,  
 Murmured like a noontide bee, 25  
 Shall I nestle near thy side?  
 Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,  
 No, not thee!

## V

Death will come when thou art  
 dead,  
 Soon, too soon— 30  
 Sleep will come when thou art  
 fled;  
 Of neither would I ask the boon  
 I ask of thee, beloved Night—  
 Swift be thine approaching flight,  
 Come soon, soon! 35

## TIME

UNFATHOMABLE Sea! whose waves are years,  
 Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe  
 Are brackish with the salt of human tears!  
 Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow

Claspest the limits of mortality, 5  
 And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,  
 Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore;  
 Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,  
 Who shall put forth on thee,  
 Unfathomable Sea? 10

## LINES

| I                              | II                              |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| FAR, far away, O ye            | Vultures, who build your bowers |
| Halcyons of Memory,            | High in the Future's towers, 10 |
| Seek some far calmer nest      | Withered hopes on hopes are     |
| Than this abandoned breast!    | spread!                         |
| No news of your false spring 5 | Dying joys, choked by the dead, |
| To my heart's winter bring,    | Will serve your beaks for prey  |
| Once having gone, in vain      | Many a day.                     |
| Ye come again.                 |                                 |

## FROM THE ARABIC: AN IMITATION

## I

My faint spirit was sitting in the light  
 Of thy looks, my love;  
 It panted for thee like the hind at noon  
 For the brooks, my love.  
 Thy barb whose hoofs outspeed the tempest's flight 5  
 Bore thee far from me;  
 My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon,  
 Did companion thee.

## II

Ah! fleeter far than fleetest storm or steed,  
 Or the death they bear, 10  
 The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove  
 With the wings of care;  
 In the battle, in the darkness, in the need,  
 Shall mine cling to thee,  
 Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love, 15  
 It may bring to thee.

## TO EMILIA VIVIANI

## I

MADONNA, wherefore hast thou sent to me  
 Sweet-basil and mignonette?  
 Embleming love and health, which never yet  
 In the same wreath might be.

Alas, and they are wet!  
 Is it with thy kisses or thy tears?  
     For never rain or dew  
     Such fragrance drew  
 From plant or flower—the very doubt endears  
     My sadness ever new,  
 The sighs I breathe, the tears I shed for thee.

5

10

## II

Send the stars light, but send not love to me,  
 In whom love ever made  
 Health like a heap of embers soon to fade—

## THE FUGITIVES

## I

THE waters are flashing,  
 The white hail is dashing,  
 The lightnings are glancing,  
 The hoar-spray is dancing—  
     Away!

5

The whirlwind is rolling,  
 The thunder is tolling,  
 The forest is swinging,  
 The minster bells ringing—  
     Come away!

10

The Earth is like Ocean,  
 Wreck-strewn and in motion:  
 Bird, beast, man and worm  
 Have crept out of the storm—  
     Come away!

15

## II

'Our boat has one sail,  
 And the helmsman is pale;—  
 A bold pilot I trow,  
 Who should follow us now,'—  
     Shouted he—

20

And she cried: 'Ply the oar!  
 Put off gaily from shore!'—  
 As she spoke, bolts of death  
 Mixed with hail, specked their path  
     O'er the sea.

25

And from isle, tower and rock,  
 The blue beacon-cloud broke,  
 And though dumb in the blast,  
 The red cannon flashed fast  
     From the lee.

30

## III

And 'Fear'st thou?' and 'Fear'st  
     thou?'  
 And 'Seest thou?' and 'Hear'st  
     thou?'

And 'Drive we not free  
 O'er the terrible sea,  
     I and thou?'

35

One boat-cloak did cover  
 The loved and the lover—  
 Their blood beats one measure,  
 They murmur proud pleasure  
     Soft and low;—

40

While around the lashed Ocean,  
 Like mountains in motion,  
 Is withdrawn and uplifted,  
 Sunk, shattered and shifted  
     To and fro.

45

## IV

In the court of the fortress  
 Beside the pale portress,  
 Like a bloodhound well beaten  
 The bridegroom stands, eaten  
     By shame;

50

On the topmost watch-turret,  
As a death-boding spirit,  
Stands the gray tyrant father,  
To his voice the mad weather  
Seems tame;

55

And with curses as wild  
As e'er clung to child,  
He devotes to the blast,  
The best, loveliest and last  
Of his name!

60

## TO —

MUSIC, when soft voices die,  
Vibrates in the memory—  
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,  
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,  
Are heaped for the beloved bed;  
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,  
Love itself shall slumber on.

5

## SONG

## I

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,  
Spirit of Delight!  
Wherefore hast thou left me now  
Many a day and night?  
Many a weary night and day  
'Tis since thou art fled away.

5

## II

How shall ever one like me  
Win thee back again?  
With the joyous and the free  
Thou wilt scoff at pain.  
Spirit false! thou hast forgot  
All but those who need thee not.

10

## III

As a lizard with the shade  
Of a trembling leaf,  
Thou with sorrow art dismayed; 15  
Even the sighs of grief  
Reproach thee, that thou art not  
near,  
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

## IV

Let me set my mournful ditty  
To a merry measure;  
Thou wilt never come for pity,  
Thou wilt come for pleasure;

20

Pity then will cut away  
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt  
stay.

## V

I love all that thou lovest, 25  
Spirit of Delight!  
The fresh Earth in new leaves  
dressed,  
And the starry night;  
Autumn evening, and the morn  
When the golden mists are born. 30

## VI

I love snow, and all the forms  
Of the radiant frost;  
I love waves, and winds, and  
storms,  
Everything almost  
Which is Nature's, and may be 35  
Untainted by man's misery.

## VII

I love tranquil solitude,  
And such society  
As is quiet, wise, and good;  
Between thee and me 40  
What difference? but thou dost  
possess  
The things I seek, not love them  
less.

## VIII

I love Love—though he has wings,  
And like light can flee,  
But above all other things, 45

Spirit, I love thee—  
Thou art love and life! Oh, come,  
Make once more my heart thy  
home.

## MUTABILITY

## I

THE flower that smiles to-day  
To-morrow dies;  
All that we wish to stay  
Tempt and then flies.  
What is this world's delight? 5  
Lightning that mocks the night,  
Brief even as bright.

## II

Virtue, how frail it is!  
Friendship how rare!  
Love, how it sells poor bliss 10

For proud despair!

But we, though soon they fall,  
Survive their joy, and all  
Which ours we call.

## III

Whilst skies are blue and bright, 15  
Whilst flowers are gay,  
Whilst eyes that change ere night  
Make glad the day;  
Whilst yet the calm hours creep,  
Dream thou—and from thy sleep 20  
Then wake to weep.

LINES WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE  
DEATH OF NAPOLEON

WHAT! alive and so bold, O Earth?  
Art thou not overbold?  
What! leapest thou forth as of old  
In the light of thy morning mirth,  
The last of the flock of the starry fold? 5  
Ha! leapest thou forth as of old?  
Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled,  
And canst thou move, Napoleon being dead?  
How! is not thy quick heart cold?  
What spark is alive on thy hearth? 10  
How! is not *his* death-knell knolled?  
And livest *thou* still, Mother Earth?  
Thou wert warming thy fingers old  
O'er the embers covered and cold  
Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled— 15  
What, Mother, do you laugh now he is dead?  
'Who has known me of old,' replied Earth,  
'Or who has my story told?  
It is thou who art overbold.'  
And the lightning of scorn laughed forth 20  
As she sung, 'To my bosom I fold  
All my sons when their knell is knolled  
And so with living motion all are fed,  
And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead.

'Still alive and still bold,' shouted Earth, 25  
     'I grow bolder and still more bold.  
 The dead fill me ten thousandfold  
 Fuller of speed, and splendour, and mirth.  
 I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold,  
 Like a frozen chaos unrolled, 30  
 Till by the spirit of the mighty dead  
 My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed.  
 'Ay, alive and still bold,' muttered Earth,  
     'Napoleon's fierce spirit rolled,  
     In terror and blood and gold, 35  
 A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.  
 Leave the millions who follow to mould  
 The metal before it be cold;  
 And weave into his shame, which like the dead  
 Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled. 40

SONNET: POLITICAL GREATNESS

Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,  
 Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,  
 Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame;  
 Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,  
 History is but the shadow of their shame, 5  
 Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts  
 As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,  
 Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery  
 Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit  
 By force or custom? Man who man would be, 10  
 Must rule the empire of himself; in it  
 Must be supreme, establishing his throne  
 On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy  
 Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

THE AZIOLA

I

'Do you not hear the Aziola cry?  
     Methinks she must be nigh,'  
     Said Mary, as we sate  
 In dusk, ere stars were lit, or candles brought; 5  
     And I, who thought  
     This Aziola was some tedious woman,  
     Asked, 'Who is Aziola?' How elate  
 I felt to know that it was nothing human,  
     No mockery of myself to fear or hate: 10  
     And Mary saw my soul,  
 And laughed, and said, 'Disquiet yourself not;  
     'Tis nothing but a little downy owl.'

## II

Sad Aziola! many an eventide  
 Thy music I had heard  
 By wood and stream, meadow and mountain-side, 15  
 And fields and marshes wide,—  
 Such as nor voice, nor lute, nor wind, nor bird,  
 The soul ever stirred;  
 Unlike and far sweeter than them all.  
 Sad Aziola! from that moment I 20  
 Loved thee and thy sad cry.

## A LAMENT

## I

O WORLD! O life! O time!  
 On whose last steps I climb,  
 Trembling at that where I had stood before;  
 When will return the glory of your prime?  
 No more—Oh, never more! 5

## II

Out of the day and night  
 A joy has taken flight;  
 Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,  
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight  
 No more—Oh, never more! 10

## REMEMBRANCE

## I

SWIFTER far than summer's flight—  
 Swifter far than youth's delight—  
 Swifter far than happy night,  
 Art thou come and gone—  
 As the earth when leaves are 5  
 dead,  
 As the night when sleep is sped,  
 As the heart when joy is fled,  
 I am left lone, alone.

## II

The swallow summer comes  
 again—  
 The owl night resumes her  
 reign—  
 But the wild-swan youth is fain 11

To fly with thee, false as  
 thou.—

My heart each day desires the mor-  
 row;  
 Sleep itself is turned to sorrow;  
 Vainly would my winter borrow 15  
 Sunny leaves from any bough.

## II

Lilies for a bridal bed—  
 Roses for a matron's head—  
 Violets for a maiden dead—  
 Pansies let *my* flowers be: 20  
 On the living grave I bear  
 Scatter them without a tear—  
 Let no friend, however dear,  
 Waste one hope, one fear for  
 me.

## TO EDWARD WILLIAMS

## I

THE serpent is shut out from Paradise.  
 The wounded deer must seek the herb no more  
 In which its heart-cure lies:  
 The widowed dove must cease to haunt a bower  
 Like that from which its mate with feignèd sighs 5  
 Fled in the April hour.  
 I too must seldom seek again  
 Near happy friends a mitigated pain.

## II

Of hatred I am proud,—with scorn content;  
 Indifference, that once hurt me, now is grown 10  
 Itself indifferent;  
 But, not to speak of love, pity alone  
 Can break a spirit already more than bent.  
 The miserable one  
 Turns the mind's poison into food,— 15  
 Its medicine is tears,—its evil good.

## III

Therefore, if now I see you seldomer,  
 Dear friends, dear *friend!* know that I only fly  
 Your looks, because they stir  
 Griefs that should sleep, and hopes that cannot die: 20  
 The very comfort that they minister  
 I scarce can bear, yet I,  
 So deeply is the arrow gone,  
 Should quickly perish if it were withdrawn.

## IV

When I return to my cold home, you ask 25  
 Why I am not as I have ever been.  
 You spoil me for the task  
 Of acting a forced part in life's dull scene,—  
 Of wearing on my brow the idle mask  
 Of author, great or mean, 30  
 In the world's carnival. I sought  
 Peace thus, and but in you I found it not.

## V

Full half an hour, to-day, I tried my lot  
 With various flowers, and every one still said,  
 'She loves me—loves me not.' 35  
 And if this meant a vision long since fled—  
 If it meant fortune, fame, or peace of thought—  
 If it meant,—but I dread



To speak what you may know too well:  
Still there was truth in the sad oracle. 40

## VI

The crane o'er seas and forests seeks her home;  
No bird so wild but has its quiet nest,  
When it no more would roam;  
The sleepless billows on the ocean's breast  
Break like a bursting heart, and die in foam, 45  
And thus at length find rest:  
Doubtless there is a place of peace  
Where *my* weak heart and all its throbs will cease.

## VII

I asked her, yesterday, if she believed  
That I had resolution. One who *had* 50  
Would ne'er have thus relieved  
His heart with words,—but what his judgement bade  
Would do, and leave the scorner unrelieved.  
These verses are too sad  
To send to you, but that I know, 55  
Happy yourself, you feel another's woe.

## TO ———

## I

ONE word is too often profaned  
For me to profane it,  
One feeling too falsely disdained  
For thee to disdain it;  
One hope is too like despair 5  
For prudence to smother,  
And pity from thee more dear  
Than that from another.

## II

I can give not what men call love,  
But wilt thou accept not 10  
The worship the heart lifts above  
And the Heavens reject not,—  
The desire of the moth for the star,  
Of the night for the morrow,  
The devotion to something afar 15  
From the sphere of our sor-  
row?

## TO ———

## I

WHEN passion's trance is overpast,  
If tenderness and truth could last,  
Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep  
Some mortal slumber, dark and  
deep,  
I should not weep, I should not 5  
weep!

## II

It were enough to feel, to see,  
Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,

And dream the rest—and burn  
and be  
The secret food of fires unseen,  
Couldst thou but be as thou hast  
been. 10

## III

After the slumber of the year  
The woodland violets reappear;  
All things revive in field or grove,  
And sky and sea, but two, which  
move  
And form all others, life and love. 15

## A BRIDAL SONG

## I

THE golden gates of Sleep unbar  
 Where Strength and Beauty, met  
 together,  
 Kindle their image like a star  
 In a sea of glassy weather!  
 Night, with all thy stars look  
 down,— 5  
 Darkness, weep thy holiest  
 dew,—  
 Never smiled the inconstant moon  
 On a pair so true.

Let eyes not see their own de-  
 light;— 9  
 Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight  
 Oft renew.

## II

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep  
 her!  
 Holy stars, permit no wrong!  
 And return to wake the sleeper,  
 Dawn,—ere it be long! 15  
 O joy! O fear! what will be done  
 In the absence of the sun!  
 Come along!

## EPITHALAMIUM

## ANOTHER VERSION OF THE PRECEDING

NIGHT, with all thine eyes look  
 down!  
 Darkness shed its holiest dew!  
 When ever smiled the inconstant  
 moon  
 On a pair so true?  
 Hence, coy hour! and quench thy  
 light, 5  
 Lest eyes see their own delight!  
 Hence, swift hour! and thy loved  
 flight  
 Oft renew.

*Boys.*

O joy! O fear! what may be done  
 In the absence of the sun? 10  
 Come along!  
 The golden gates of sleep unbar!  
 When strength and beauty meet  
 together,  
 Kindles their image like a star  
 In a sea of glassy weather. 15  
 Hence, coy hour! and quench thy  
 light,  
 Lest eyes see their own delight!

Hence, swift hour! and thy loved  
 flight  
 Oft renew.

*Girls.*

O joy! O fear! what may be done  
 In the absence of the sun? 21  
 Come along!  
 Fairies! sprites! and angels, keep  
 her!  
 Holiest powers, permit no  
 wrong!  
 And return, to wake the sleeper, 25  
 Dawn, ere it be long.  
 Hence, swift hour! and quench thy  
 light,  
 Lest eyes see their own delight!  
 Hence, coy hour! and thy loved  
 flight  
 Oft renew! 30

*Boys and Girls.*

O joy! O fear! what will be done  
 In the absence of the sun?  
 Come along!

## ANOTHER VERSION OF THE SAME

*Boys Sing.*

NIGHT! with all thine eyes look  
down!

Darkness! weep thy holiest dew!  
Never smiled the inconstant moon  
On a pair so true.

Haste, coy hour! and quench all  
light, 5

Lest eyes see their own delight!  
Haste, swift hour! and thy loved  
flight

Oft renew!

*Girls Sing.*

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep  
her!

Holy stars! permit no wrong! 10  
And return, to wake the sleeper,  
Dawn, ere it be long!

O joy! O fear! there is not one  
Of us can guess what may be done  
In the absence of the sun:— 15

Come along!

*Boys.*

Oh! linger long, thou envious east-  
ern lamp

In the damp  
Caves of the deep!

*Girls.*

Nay, return, Vesper! urge thy lazy  
car! 20

Swift unbar  
The gates of Sleep!

*Chorus.*

The golden gate of Sleep unbar,  
When Strength and Beauty, met  
together,

Kindle their image, like a star 25  
In a sea of glassy weather.

May the purple mist of love  
Round them rise, and with them  
move,

Nourishing each tender gem  
Which, like flowers, will burst from  
them. 30

As the fruit is to the tree  
May their children ever be!

## LOVE, HOPE, DESIRE, AND FEAR

AND many there were hurt by that  
strong boy,

His name, they said, was Pleas-  
ure,

And near him stood, glorious be-  
yond measure,

Four Ladies who possess all empery  
In earth and air and sea, 5

Nothing that lives from their award  
is free.

Their names will I declare to  
thee,

Love, Hope, Desire, and Fear,  
And they the regents are

Of the four elements that frame  
the heart, 10

And each diversely exercised her art  
By force or circumstance or  
sleight

To prove her dreadful might  
Upon that poor domain.

Desire presented her [false] glass,  
and then 15

The spirit dwelling there  
Was spellbound to embrace what  
seemed so fair

Within that magic mirror,  
And dazed by that bright  
error,

It would have scorned the [shafts] of the avenger, 20  
 And death, and penitence, and danger,  
 Had not then silent Fear  
 Touched with her palsyng spear,  
 So that as if a frozen torrent  
 The blood was curdled in its current; 25  
 It dared not speak, even in look or motion,  
 But chained within itself its proud devotion.  
 Between Desire and Fear thou wert  
 A wretched thing, poor heart!  
 Sad was his life who bore thee in his breast, 30  
 Wild bird for that weak nest.  
 Till Love even from fierce Desire it bought,  
 And from the very wound of tender thought  
 Drew solace, and the pity of sweet eyes  
 Gave strength to bear those gentle agonies, 35

Surmount the loss, the terror, and the sorrow.  
 Then Hope approached, she who can borrow  
 For poor to-day, from rich to-morrow,  
 And Fear withdrew, as night when day  
 Descends upon the orient ray, 40  
 And after long and vain endurance  
 The poor heart woke to her assurance.  
 —At one birth these four were born  
 With the world's forgotten morn,  
 And from Pleasure still they hold All it circles, as of old. 46  
 When, as summer lures the swallow,  
 Pleasure lures the heart to follow—  
 O weak heart of little wit!  
 The fair hand that wounded it, 50  
 Seeking, like a panting hare,  
 Refuge in the lynx's lair,  
 Love, Desire, Hope, and Fear.  
 Ever will be near.

## FRAGMENTS WRITTEN FOR HELLAS

## I

FAIREST of the Destinies,  
 Disarray thy dazzling eyes:  
 Keener far thy lightnings are  
 Than the winged [bolts] thou bearest,  
 And the smile thou wearest 5  
 Wraps thee as a star  
 Is wrapped in light.

## II

Could Arethuse to her forsaken urn  
 From Alpheus and the bitter Doris run,  
 Or could the morning shafts of purest light 10

Again into the quivers of the Sun  
 Be gathered—could one thought from its wild flight  
 Return into the temple of the brain  
 Without a change, without a stain,—  
 Could aught that is, ever again 15  
 Be what it once has ceased to be.  
 Greece might again be free!

## III

A star has fallen upon the earth  
 Mid the benighted nations,

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A quenchless atom of immortal<br>light, 20<br>A living spark of Night,<br>A cresset shaken from the constel-<br>lations.<br>Swifter than the thunder fell<br>To the heart of Earth, the well<br>Where its pulses flow and beat, 25<br>And unextinct in that cold source<br>Burns, and on           course<br>Guides the sphere which is its<br>prison, | Like an angelic spirit pent<br>In a form of mortal birth, 30<br>Till, as a spirit half-arisen<br>Shatters its charnel, it has<br>rent,<br>In the rapture of its mirth,<br>The thin and painted garment of<br>the Earth, 34<br>Ruining its chaos—a fierce breath<br>Consuming all its forms of living<br>death. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## FRAGMENT: 'I WOULD NOT BE A KING'

|                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I WOULD not be a king—enough<br>Of woe it is to love;<br>The path to power is steep and<br>rough,<br>And tempests reign above.<br>I would not climb the imperial<br>throne; 5 | 'Tis built on ice which fortune's sur-<br>Thaws in the height of noon.<br>Then farewell, king, yet were I<br>one,<br>Care would not come so soon.<br>Would he and I were far away 10<br>Keeping flocks on Himalay! |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## GINEVRA

WILD, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one  
 Who staggers forth into the air and sun  
 From the dark chamber of a mortal fever,  
 Bewildered, and incapable, and ever  
 Fancying strange comments in her dizzy brain 3  
 Of usual shapes, till the familiar train  
 Of objects and of persons passed like things  
 Strange as a dreamer's mad imaginings,  
 Ginevra from the nuptial altar went;  
 The vows to which her lips had sworn assent 10  
 Rung in her brain still with a jarring din,  
 Deafening the lost intelligence within.

And so she moved under the bridal veil,  
 Which made the paleness of her cheek more pale,  
 And deepened the faint crimson of her mouth,  
 And darkened her dark locks, as moonlight doth,— 15  
 And of the gold and jewels glittering there  
 She scarce felt conscious,—but the weary glare  
 Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light,  
 Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight, 20  
 A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud  
 Was less heavenly fair—her face was bowed,

And as she passed, the diamonds in her hair  
 Were mirrored in the polished marble stair  
 Which led from the cathedral to the street; 25  
 And ever as she went her light fair feet  
 Erased these images.

The bride-maidens who round her thronging came,  
 Some with a sense of self-rebuke and shame,  
 Envyng the unenviable; and others 30  
 Making the joy which should have been another's  
 Their own by gentle sympathy; and some  
 Sighing to think of an unhappy home:  
 Some few admiring what can ever lure  
 Maidens to leave the heaven serene and pure 35  
 Of parents' smiles for life's great cheat; a thing  
 Bitter to taste, sweet in imagining.

But they are all dispersed—and, lo! she stands  
 Looking in idle grief on her white hands,  
 Alone within the garden now her own; 40  
 And through the sunny air, with jangling tone,  
 The music of the merry marriage-bells,  
 Killing the azure silence, sinks and swells;—  
 Absorbed like one within a dream who dreams  
 That he is dreaming, until slumber seems 45  
 A mockery of itself—when suddenly  
 Antonio stood before her, pale as she.  
 With agony, with sorrow, and with pride,  
 He lifted his wan eyes upon the bride,  
 And said—'Is this thy faith?' and then as one 50  
 Whose sleeping face is stricken by the sun  
 With light like a harsh voice, which bids him rise  
 And look upon his day of life with eyes  
 Which weep in vain that they can dream no more,  
 Ginevra saw her lover, and forbore 55  
 To shriek or faint, and checked the stifling blood  
 Rushing upon her heart, and unsubdued  
 Said—'Friend, if earthly violence or ill,  
 Suspicion, doubt, or the tyrannic will  
 Of parents, chance or custom, time or change, 60  
 Or circumstance, or terror, or revenge,  
 Or wildered looks, or words, or evil speech,  
 With all their stings and venom can impeach  
 Our love,—we love not:—if the grave which hides  
 The victim from the tyrant, and divides 65  
 The cheek that whitens from the eyes that dart  
 Imperious inquisition to the heart

That is another's, could dissever ours,  
 We love not.'—'What! do not the silent hours  
 Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal bed? 70  
 Is not that ring'—a pledge, he would have said,  
 Of broken vows, but she with patient look  
 The golden circle from her finger took,  
 And said—'Accept this token of my faith,  
 The pledge of vows to be absolved by death; 75  
 And I am dead or shall be soon—my knell  
 Will mix its music with that merry bell,  
 Does it not sound as if they sweetly said  
 "We toll a corpse out of the marriage-bed"?  
 The flowers upon my bridal chamber strewn 80  
 Will serve unfaded for my bier—so soon  
 That even the dying violet will not die  
 Before Ginevra.' The strong fantasy  
 Had made her accents weaker and more weak,  
 And quenched the crimson life upon her cheek, 85  
 And glazed her eyes, and spread an atmosphere  
 Round her, which chilled the burning noon with fear,  
 Making her but an image of the thought  
 Which, like a prophet or a shadow, brought  
 News of the terrors of the coming time. 90  
 Like an accuser branded with the crime  
 He would have cast on a beloved friend,  
 Whose dying eyes reproach not to the end  
 The pale betrayer—he then with vain repentance  
 Would share, he cannot now avert, the sentence— 95  
 Antonio stood and would have spoken, when  
 The compound voice of women and of men  
 Was heard approaching; he retired, while she  
 Was led amid the admiring company  
 Back to the palace,—and her maidens soon 100  
 Changed her attire for the afternoon,  
 And left her at her own request to keep  
 An hour of quiet and rest:—like one asleep  
 With open eyes and folded hands she lay,  
 Pale in the light of the declining day. 105

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set,  
 And in the lighted hall the guests are met;  
 The beautiful looked lovelier in the light  
 Of love, and admiration, and delight  
 Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes, 110  
 Kindling a momentary Paradise.  
 This crowd is safer than the silent wood,  
 Where love's own doubts disturb the solitude;

On frozen hearts the fiery rain of wine  
 Falls, and the dew of music more divine 115  
 Tempers the deep emotions of the time  
 To spirits cradled in a sunny clime:—  
 How many meet, who never yet have met,  
 To part too soon, but never to forget.  
 How many saw the beauty, power and wit 120  
 Of looks and words which ne'er enchanted yet;  
 But life's familiar veil was now withdrawn,  
 As the world leaps before an earthquake's dawn,  
 And unprophetic of the coming hours,  
 The matin winds from the expanded flowers 125  
 Scatter their hoarded incense, and awaken  
 The earth, until the dewy sleep is shaken  
 From every living heart which it possesses,  
 Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses,  
 As if the future and the past were all 130  
 Treasured i' the instant;—so Gherardi's hall  
 Laughed in the mirth of its lord's festival,  
 Till some one asked—'Where is the Bride?' And then  
 A bridesmaid went,—and ere she came again  
 A silence fell upon the guests—a pause 135  
 Of expectation, as when beauty awes  
 All hearts with its approach, though unbeheld,  
 Then wonder, and then fear that wonder quelled;—  
 For whispers passed from mouth to ear which drew  
 The colour from the hearer's cheeks, and flew 140  
 Louder and swifter round the company;  
 And then Gherardi entered with an eye  
 Of ostentatious trouble, and a crowd  
 Surrounded him, and some were weeping loud.

They found Ginevra dead! if it be death 145  
 To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath,  
 With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff, and white,  
 And open eyes, whose fixed and glassy light  
 Mocked at the speculation they had owned.  
 If it be death, when there is felt around 150  
 A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare,  
 And silence, and a sense that lifts the hair  
 From the scalp to the ankles, as it were  
 Corruption from the spirit passing forth,  
 And giving all it shrouded to the earth, 155  
 And leaving as swift lightning in its flight  
 Ashes, and smoke, and darkness: in our night  
 Of thought we know thus much of death,—no more  
 Than the unborn dream of our life before



Their barks are wrecked on its inhospitable shore. 160  
 The marriage feast and its solemnity  
 Was turned to funeral pomp—the company,  
 With heavy hearts and looks, broke up; nor they  
 Who loved the dead went weeping on their way  
 Alone, but sorrow mixed with sad surprise 165  
 Loosened the springs of pity in all eyes,  
 On which that form, whose fate they weep in vain,  
 Will never, thought they, kindle smiles again.  
 The lamps which, half extinguished in their haste,  
 Gleamed few and faint o'er the abandoned feast, 170  
 Showed as it were within the vaulted room  
 A cloud of sorrow hanging, as if gloom  
 Had passed out of men's minds into the air.  
 Some few yet stood around Gherardi there,  
 Friends and relations of the dead,—and he, 175  
 A loveless man, accepted torpidly  
 The consolation that he wanted not;  
 Awe in the place of grief within him wrought.  
 Their whispers made the solemn silence seem  
 More still—some wept, . . . 180  
 Some melted into tears without a sob,  
 And some with hearts that might be heard to throb  
 Leaned on the table, and at intervals  
 Shuddered to hear through the deserted halls  
 And corridors the thrilling shrieks which came 185  
 Upon the breeze of night, that shook the flame  
 Of every torch and taper as it swept  
 From out the chamber where the women kept;—  
 Their tears fell on the dear companion cold  
 Of pleasures now departed; then was knolled 190  
 The bell of death, and soon the priests arrived,  
 And finding Death their penitent had shrived,  
 Returned like ravens from a corpse whereon  
 A vulture has just feasted to the bone.  
 And then the mourning women came.— 195

. . . . .

THE DIRGE

Old winter was gone  
 In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,  
 And the spring came down  
 From the planet that hovers upon the shore  
 Where the sea of sunlight encroaches 200  
 On the limits of wintry night;—  
 If the land, and the air, and the sea,

## S H E L L E Y

Rejoice not when spring approaches,  
 We did not rejoice in thee,  
 Ginevra! 205

She is still, she is cold  
     On the bridal couch,  
 One step to the white deathbed,  
     And one to the bier,  
 And one to the charnel—and one, oh where? 210  
     The dark arrow fled  
     In the noon.

Ere the sun through heaven once more has rolled,  
 The rats in her heart  
 Will have made their nest, 215  
 And the worms be alive in her golden hair,  
 While the Spirit that guides the sun,  
 Sits throned in his flaming chair,  
     She shall sleep.

## EVENING: PONTE AL MARE, PISA

## I

THE sun is set; the swallows are asleep;  
 The bats are flitting fast in the gray air;  
 The slow soft toads out of damp corners creep,  
 And evening's breath, wandering here and there 5  
 Over the quivering surface of the stream,  
 Wakes not one ripple from its summer dream.

## II

There is no dew on the dry grass to-night,  
 Nor damp within the shadow of the trees;  
 The wind is intermitting, dry, and light;  
 And in the inconstant motion of the breeze 10  
 The dust and straws are driven up and down,  
 And whirled about the pavement of the town.

## III

Within the surface of the fleeting river  
 The wrinkled image of the city lay,  
 Immovably unquiet, and forever 15  
 It trembles, but it never fades away;  
 Go to the . . .  
 You, being changed, will find it then as now.

## IV

The chasm in which the sun has sunk is shut  
 By darkest barriers of cinereous cloud, 20  
 Like mountain over mountain huddled—but  
 Growing and moving upwards in a crowd,  
 And over it a space of watery blue,  
 Which the keen evening star is shining through.

## THE BOAT ON THE SERCHIO

Our boat is asleep on Serchio's stream,  
 Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream,  
 The helm sways idly, hither and thither;  
 Dominic, the boatman, has brought the mast,  
 And the oars, and the sails; but 'tis sleeping fast, 5  
 Like a beast, unconscious of its tether.

The stars burnt out in the pale blue air,  
 And the thin white moon lay withering there;  
 To tower, and cavern, and rift, and tree,  
 The owl and the bat fled drowsily. 10  
 Day had kindled the dewy woods,  
 And the rocks above and the stream below,  
 And the vapours in their multitudes,  
 And the Apennine's shroud of summer snow,  
 And clothed with light of æry gold 15  
 The mists in their eastern caves uprolled.

Day had awakened all things that be,  
 The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,  
 And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,  
 And the matin-bell and the mountain bee: 20  
 Fireflies were quenched on the dewy corn,  
 Glow-worms went out on the river's brim,  
 Like lamps which a student forgets to trim:  
 The beetle forgot to wind his horn,  
 The crickets were still in the meadow and hill: 25  
 Like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun  
 Night's dreams and terrors, every one,  
 Fled from the brains which are their prey  
 From the lamp's death to the morning ray.

All rose to do the task He set to each, 30  
 Who shaped us to His ends and not our own;  
 The million rose to learn, and one to teach  
 What none yet ever knew or can be known.  
 And many rose

- Whose woe was such that fear became desire;— 35  
 Melchior and Lionel were not among those;  
 They from the throng of men had stepped aside,  
 And made their home under the green hill-side.  
 It was that hill, whose intervening brow  
 Screens Lucca from the Pisan's envious eye, 40  
 Which the circumfluous plain waving below,  
 Like a wide lake of green fertility,  
 With streams and fields and marshes bare,  
 Divides from the far Apennines—which lie  
 Islanded in the immeasurable air. 45
- 'What think you, as she lies in her green cove,  
 Our little sleeping boat is dreaming of?'  
 'If morning dreams are true, why I should guess  
 That she was dreaming of our idleness,  
 And of the miles of watery way 50  
 We should have led her by this time of day.'—
- 'Never mind,' said Lionel,  
 'Give care to the winds, they can bear it well  
 About yon poplar-tops; and see  
 The white clouds are driving merrily, 55  
 And the stars we miss this morn will light  
 More willingly our return to-night.—  
 How it whistles, Dominic's long black hair!  
 List, my dear fellow; the breeze blows fair:  
 Hear how it sings into the air—' 60
- 'Of us and of our lazy motions,'  
 Impatiently said Melchior,  
 'If I can guess a boat's emotions;  
 And how we ought, two hours before,  
 To have been the devil knows where.' 65  
 And then, in such transalpine Tuscan  
 As would have killed a Della-Cruscan,  
 . . . . .
- So, Lionel according to his art  
 Weaving his idle words, Melchior said:  
 'She dreams that we are not yet out of bed;  
 We'll put a soul into her, and a heart 70  
 Which like a dove chased by a dove shall beat.'  
 . . . . .
- 'Ay, heave the ballast overboard,  
 And stow the eatables in the aft locker.'  
 'Would not this keg be best a little lowered?' 75  
 'No, now all's right.' 'Those bottles of warm tea—

(Give me some straw)—must be stowed tenderly;  
Such as we used, in summer after six,  
To cram in greatcoat pockets, and to mix  
Hard eggs and radishes and rolls at Eton,  
And, couched on stolen hay in those green harbours  
Farmers called gaps, and we schoolboys called arbour,  
Would feast till eight.'

80

With a bottle in one hand,  
As if his very soul were at a stand,  
Lionel stood—when Melchior brought him steady:—  
'Sit at the helm—fasten this sheet—all ready!'

85

The chain is loosed, the sails are spread,  
The living breath is fresh behind,  
As, with dews and sunrise fed,

90

Comes the laughing morning wind;—  
The sails are full, the boat makes head  
Against the Serchio's torrent fierce,  
Then flags with intermitting course,  
And hangs upon the wave, and stems

95

The tempest of the . . .  
Which fervid from its mountain source  
Shallow, smooth and strong doth come,—  
Swift as fire, tempestuously  
It sweeps into the affrighted sea  
In morning's smile its eddies coil,  
Its billows sparkle, toss and boil,  
Torturing all its quiet light  
Into columns fierce and bright.

100

The Serchio, twisting forth  
Between the marble barriers which it clove  
At Ripafratta, leads through the dread chasm  
The wave that died the death which lovers love,  
Living in what it sought; as if this spasm  
Had not yet passed, the toppling mountains cling,  
But the clear stream in full enthusiasm  
Fours itself on the plain, then wandering  
Down one clear path of effluence crystalline  
Sends its superfluous waves, that they may fling  
At Arno's feet tribute of corn and wine;  
Then, through the pestilential deserts wild  
Of tangled marsh and woods of stunted pine,  
It rushes to the Ocean.

105

110

115

## MUSIC

## I

I PANT for the music which is divine,  
 My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;  
 Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,  
 Loosen the notes in a silver shower;  
 Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain, 5  
 I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

## II

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound,  
 More, oh more,—I am thirsting yet;  
 It loosens the serpent which care has bound  
 Upon my heart to stifle it; 10  
 The dissolving strain, through every vein,  
 Passes into my heart and brain.

## III

As the scent of a violet withered up,  
 Which grew by the brink of a silver lake,  
 When the hot noon has drained its dewy cup, 15  
 And mist there was none its thirst to slake—  
 And the violet lay dead while the odour flew  
 On the wings of the wind o'er the waters blue—

## IV

As one who drinks from a charmed cup  
 Of foaming, and sparkling, and murmuring wine, 20  
 Whom, a mighty Enchantress filling up,  
 Invites to love with her kiss divine . . .

## SONNET TO BYRON

[I AM afraid these verses will not please you, but]  
 If I esteemed you less, Envy would kill  
 Pleasure, and leave to Wonder and Despair  
 The ministration of the thoughts that fill  
 The mind which, like a worm whose life may share 5  
 A portion of the unapproachable,  
 Marks your creations rise as fast and fair  
 As perfect worlds at the Creator's will.  
 But such is my regard that nor your power  
 To soar above the heights where others [climb],  
 Nor fame, that shadow of the unborn hour 10  
 Cast from the envious future on the time,  
 Move one regret for his unhonoured name  
 Who dares these words:—the worm beneath the sod  
 May lift itself in homage of the God.

## FRAGMENT ON KEATS

WHO DESIRED THAT ON HIS TOMB SHOULD BE INSCRIBED—

‘HERE lieth One whose name was writ on water.’  
 But, ere the breath that could erase it blew,  
 Death, in remorse for that fell slaughter,  
 Death, the immortalizing winter, flew  
 Athwart the stream,—and time’s printless torrent grew 5  
 A scroll of crystal, blazoning the name  
 Of Adonais!

FRAGMENT: ‘METHOUGHT I WAS A BILLOW  
IN THE CROWD’

METHOUGHT I was a billow in the crowd  
 Of common men, that stream without a shore,  
 That ocean which at once is deaf and loud;  
 That I, a man, stood amid many more  
 By a wayside . . . , which the aspect bore 5  
 Of some imperial metropolis,  
 Where mighty shapes—pyramid, dome, and tower—  
 Gleamed like a pile of crags—

## TO-MORROW

WHERE art thou, beloved To-morrow?  
 When young and old, and strong and weak,  
 Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow,  
 Thy sweet smiles we ever seek,—  
 In thy place—ah! well-a-day! 5  
 We find the thing we fled—To-day.

## STANZA

IF I walk in Autumn’s even  
 While the dead leaves pass,  
 If I look on Spring’s soft heaven,—  
 Something is not there which was.  
 Winter’s wondrous frost and snow, 5  
 Summer’s clouds, where are they now?

## FRAGMENT: A WANDERER

HE wanders, like a day-appearing dream,  
 Through the dim wildernesses of the mind;  
 Through desert woods and tracts, which seem  
 Like ocean, homeless, boundless, unconfined.

## FRAGMENT: LIFE ROUNDED WITH SLEEP

THE babe is at peace within the womb;  
 The corpse is at rest within the tomb:  
 We begin in what we end.

## FRAGMENT: 'I FAINT, I PERISH WITH MY LOVE!'

I FAINT, I perish with my love! I grow  
 Frail as a cloud whose [splendours] pale  
 Under the evening's ever-changing glow:  
 I die like mist upon the gale,  
 And like a wave under the calm I fail.

5

## FRAGMENT: THE LADY OF THE SOUTH

FAINT with love, the Lady of the South  
 Lay in the paradise of Lebanon  
 Under a heaven of cedar boughs: the drouth  
 Of love was on her lips; the light was gone  
 Out of her eyes—

5

## FRAGMENT: ZEPHYRUS THE AWAKENER

COME, thou awakener of the spirit's ocean,  
 Zephyr, whom to thy cloud or cave  
 No thought can trace! speed with thy gentle motion!

## FRAGMENT: RAIN

THE gentleness of rain was in the wind.

## FRAGMENT: 'WHEN SOFT WINDS AND SUNNY SKIES'

WHEN soft winds and sunny skies  
 With the green earth harmonize,  
 And the young and dewy dawn,  
 Bold as an unhunted fawn,  
 Up the windless heaven is gone,—  
 Laugh—for ambushed in the day,—  
 Clouds and whirlwinds watch their prey.

5

FRAGMENT: 'AND THAT I WALK THUS  
PROUDLY CROWNED'

AND that I walk thus proudly crowned withal  
 Is that 'tis my distinction; if I fall,  
 I shall not weep out of the vital day,  
 To-morrow dust, nor wear a dull decay.



## FRAGMENT: 'THE RUDE WIND IS SINGING'

THE rude wind is singing  
 The dirge of the music dead;  
 The cold worms are clinging  
 Where kisses were lately fed.

## FRAGMENT: 'GREAT SPIRIT'

GREAT Spirit whom the sea of boundless thought  
 Nurtures within its unimagined caves,  
 In which thou sittest sole, as in my mind,  
 Giving a voice to its mysterious waves—

## FRAGMENT: 'O THOU IMMORTAL DEITY'

O THOU immortal deity  
 Whose throne is in the depth of human thought,  
 I do adjure thy power and thee  
 By all that man may be, by all that he is not,  
 By all that he has been and yet must be!

5

## FRAGMENT: THE FALSE LAUREL AND THE TRUE

'WHAT art thou, Presumptuous, who profanest  
 The wreath to mighty poets only due,  
 Even whilst like a forgotten moon thou wanest?  
 Touch not those leaves which for the eternal few  
 Who wander o'er the Paradise of fame,  
 In sacred dedication ever grew:  
 One of the crowd thou art without a name.'  
 'Ah, friend, 'tis the false laurel that I wear;  
 Bright though it seem, it is not the same  
 As that which bound Milton's immortal hair;  
 Its dew is poison; and the hopes that quicken  
 Under its chilling shade, though seeming fair,  
 Are flowers which die almost before they sicken.'

5

10

## FRAGMENT: MAY THE LIMNER

WHEN May is painting with her colours gay  
 The landscape sketched by April her sweet twin...

## FRAGMENT: BEAUTY'S HALO

THY beauty hangs around thee like  
 Splendour around the moon—  
 Thy voice, as silver bells that strike  
 Upon

## FRAGMENT: 'THE DEATH KNELL IS RINGING'

THE death knell is ringing  
 The raven is singing  
 The earth worm is creeping  
 The mourners are weeping  
 Ding dong, bell—

5

## FRAGMENT: 'I STOOD UPON A HEAVEN-CLEAVING TURRET'

I STOOD upon a heaven-cleaving turret  
 Which overlooked a wide Metropolis—  
 And in the temple of my heart my Spirit  
 Lay prostrate, and with parted lips did kiss  
 The dust of Desolations [altar] hearth—  
 And with a voice too faint to falter  
 It shook that trembling fane with its weak prayer  
 'Twas noon,—the sleeping skies were blue  
 The city

5

## NOTE ON POEMS OF 1821, BY MRS. SHELLEY

My task becomes inexpressibly painful as the year draws near that which sealed our earthly fate, and each poem, and each event it records, has a real or mysterious connexion with the fatal catastrophe. I feel that I am incapable of putting on paper the history of those times. The heart of the man, abhorred of the poet, who could

'peep and botanize  
 Upon his mother's grave,'

does not appear to me more inexplicably framed than that of one who can dissect and probe past woes, and repeat to the public ear the groans drawn from them in the throes of their agony.

The year 1821 was spent in Pisa, or at the Baths of San Giuliano. We were not, as our wont had been, alone; friends had gathered round us. Nearly all are dead, and, when Memory recurs to the past, she wanders among tombs. The genius, with all his blighting errors and mighty powers; the companion of Shelley's ocean-wanderings, and the sharer of his fate, than whom no man ever existed more gentle, generous, and fearless; and others, who found in Shelley's society, and in his great knowledge and warm sympathy, delight, instruction, and solace; have joined him beyond the grave. A few survive who have felt life a desert since he left it. What misfortune can equal death? Change can convert every other into a blessing, or heal its sting—death alone has no cure. It shakes the foundations of the earth on which we tread; it destroys its beauty; it casts down our shelter; it exposes us bare to desolation. When those we love have passed into eternity, 'life is the desert and the solitude' in which we are forced to linger—but never find comfort more.

There is much in the *Adonais* which seems now more applicable to Shelley himself than to the young and gifted poet whom he mourned. The poetic view he takes of death, and the lofty scorn he displays towards his calumniators, are as a prophecy on his own destiny when received among immortal names, and the poisonous breath of critics has vanished into emptiness before the fame he inherits.

Shelley's favourite taste was boating; when living near the Thames or by the Lake of Geneva, much of his life was spent on the water. On the shore of every lake or stream or sea near which he dwelt, he had a boat moored. He had latterly enjoyed this pleasure again. There are no pleasure-boats on the Arno; and the shallowness of its waters (except in winter-time, when the stream is too turbid and impetuous for boating) rendered it difficult to get any skiff light enough to float. Shelley, however, overcame the difficulty; he, together with a friend, contrived a boat such as the huntsmen carry about with them in the Maremma, to cross the sluggish but deep streams that intersect the forests,—a boat of laths and pitched canvas. It held three persons; and he was often seen on the Arno in it, to the horror of the Italians, who remonstrated on the danger and could not understand how any one could take pleasure in an exercise that risked life. 'Ma va per la vita!' they exclaimed. I little thought how true their words would prove. He once ventured, with a friend, on the glassy sea of a calm day, down the Arno and round the coast to Leghorn, which, by keeping close in shore, was very practicable. They returned to Pisa by the canal, when, missing the direct cut, they got entangled among weeds, and the boat upset; a wetting was all the harm done, except that the intense cold of his drenched clothes made Shelley faint. Once I went down with him to the mouth of the Arno, where the stream, then high and swift, met the tideless sea, and disturbed its sluggish waters. It was a waste and dreary scene; the desert sand stretched into a point surrounded by waves that broke idly though perpetually around; it was a scene very similar to Lido, of which he had said—

'I love all waste  
And solitary places; where we taste  
The pleasure of believing what we see  
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:  
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore  
More barren than its billows.'

Our little boat was of greater use, unaccompanied by any danger, when we removed to the Baths. Some friends lived at the village of Pugnano, four miles off, and we went to and fro to see them, in our boat, by the canal; which, fed by the Serchio, was, though an artificial, a full and picturesque stream, making its way under verdant banks, sheltered by trees that dipped their boughs into the murmuring waters. By day, multitudes of ephemera darted to and fro on the surface; at night, the fireflies came out among the shrubs on the banks; the cicale at noon-day kept up their hum; the aziola cooed in the quiet evening. It was a pleasant summer, bright in all but Shelley's health and inconstant spirits; yet he enjoyed himself greatly, and became more and more attached to

the part of the country where chance appeared to cast us. Sometimes he projected taking a farm situated on the height of one of the near hills, surrounded by chestnut and pine woods, and overlooking a wide extent of country: or settling still farther in the maritime Apennines, at Massa. Several of his slighter and unfinished poems were inspired by these scenes, and by the companions around us. It is the nature of that poetry, however, which overflows from the soul oftener to express sorrow and regret than joy; for it is when oppressed by the weight of life, and away from those he loves, that the poet has recourse to the solace of expression in verse.

Still, Shelley's passion was the ocean; and he wished that our summers, instead of being passed among the hills near Pisa, should be spent on the shores of the sea. It was very difficult to find a spot. We shrank from Naples from a fear that the heats would disagree with Percy: Leghorn had lost its only attraction, since our friends who had resided there were returned to England; and, Monte Nero being the resort of many English, we did not wish to find ourselves in the midst of a colony of chance travellers. No one then thought it possible to reside at Via Reggio, which latterly has become a summer resort. The low lands and bad air of Maremma stretch the whole length of the western shores of the Mediterranean, till broken by the rocks and hills of Spezia. It was a vague idea, but Shelley suggested an excursion to Spezia, to see whether it would be feasible to spend a summer there. The beauty of the bay enchanted him. We saw no house to suit us; but the notion took root, and many circumstances, enchaind as by fatality, occurred to urge him to execute it.

He looked forward this autumn with great pleasure to the prospect of a visit from Leigh Hunt. When Shelley visited Lord Byron at Ravenna, the latter had suggested his coming out, together with the plan of a periodical work in which they should all join. Shelley saw a prospect of good for the fortunes of his friend, and pleasure in his society; and instantly exerted himself to have the plan executed. He did not intend himself joining in the work: partly from pride, not wishing to have the air of acquiring readers for his poetry by associating it with the compositions of more popular writers; and also because he might feel shackled in the free expression of his opinions, if any friends were to be compromised. By those opinions, carried even to their utmost extent, he wished to live and die, as being in his conviction not only true, but such as alone would conduce to the moral improvement and happiness of mankind. The sale of the work might meanwhile, either really or supposedly, be injured by the free expression of his thoughts; and this evil he resolved to avoid.

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1822

## THE ZUCCA

## I

SUMMER was dead and Autumn was expiring,  
 And infant Winter laughed upon the land  
 All cloudlessly and cold;—when I, desiring  
 More in this world than any understand,  
 Wept o'er the beauty, which, like sea retiring, 5  
 Had left the earth bare as the wave-worn sand  
 Of my lorn heart, and o'er the grass and flowers  
 Pale for the falsehood of the flattering Hours.

## II

Summer was dead, but I yet lived to weep  
 The instability of all but weeping; 10  
 And on the Earth lulled in her winter sleep  
 I woke, and envied her as she was sleeping.  
 Too happy Earth! over thy face shall creep  
 The wakening vernal airs, until thou, leaping  
 From unremembered dreams, shalt see 15  
 No death divide thy immortality.

## III

I loved—oh, no, I mean not one of ye,  
 Or any earthly one, though ye are dear  
 As human heart to human heart may be;—  
 I loved, I know not what—but this low sphere 20  
 And all that it contains, contains not thee,  
 Thou, whom, seen nowhere, I feel everywhere.  
 From Heaven and Earth, and all that in them are,  
 Veiled art thou, like a star.

## IV

By Heaven and Earth, from all whose shapes thou flowest, 25  
 Neither to be contained, delayed, nor hidden;  
 Making divine the loftiest and the lowest,  
 When for a moment thou art not forbidden  
 To live within the life which thou bestowest;  
 And leaving noblest things vacant and chidden, 30  
 Cold as a corpse after the spirit's flight,  
 Blank as the sun after the birth of night.

## V

In winds, and trees, and streams, and all things common,  
 In music and the sweet unconscious tone  
 Of animals, and voices which are human, 35  
 Meant to express some feelings of their own;  
 In the soft motions and rare smile of woman,  
 In flowers and leaves, and in the grass fresh-shown,  
 Or dying in the autumn, I the most  
 Adore thee present or lament thee lost. 40

## VI

And thus I went lamenting, when I saw  
 A plant upon the river's margin lie,  
 Like one who loved beyond his nature's law,  
 And in despair had cast him down to die;  
 Its leaves, which had outlived the frost, the thaw 45  
 Had blighted; like a heart which hatred's eye  
 Can blast not, but which pity kills; the dew  
 Lay on its spotted leaves like tears too true.

## VII

The Heavens had wept upon it, but the Earth  
 Had crushed it on her unmaternal breast 50  
 . . . . .

## VIII

I bore it to my chamber, and I planted  
 It in a vase full of the lightest mould;  
 The winter beams which out of Heaven slanted  
 Fell through the window-panes, disrobed of cold,  
 Upon its leaves and flowers; the stars which panted 55  
 In evening for the Day, whose car has rolled  
 Over the horizon's wave, with looks of light  
 Smiled on it from the threshold of the night.

## IX

The mitigated influences of air  
 And light revived the plant, and from it grew 60  
 Strong leaves and tendrils, and its flowers fair,  
 Full as a cup with the vine's burning dew,  
 O'erflowed with golden colours; an atmosphere  
 Of vital warmth enfolded it anew,  
 And every impulse sent to every part 65  
 The unbeheld pulsations of its heart

## X

Well might the plant grow beautiful and strong,  
 Even if the air and sun had smiled not on it;  
 For one wept o'er it all the winter long  
 Tears pure as Heaven's rain, which fell upon it 70  
 Hour after hour; for sounds of softest song  
 Mixed with the stringèd melodies that won it  
 To leave the gentle lips on which it slept,  
 Had loosed the heart of him who sat and wept.

## XI

Had loosed his heart, and shook the leaves and flowers 75  
 On which he wept, the while the savage storm  
 Waked by the darkest of December's hours  
 Was raving round the chamber hushed and warm;  
 The birds were shivering in their leafless bowers,  
 The fish were frozen in the pools, the form 80  
 Of every summer plant was dead . . .  
 Whilst this . . .

## THE MAGNETIC LADY TO HER PATIENT

## I

'SLEEP, sleep on! forget thy pain;  
 My hand is on thy brow,  
 My spirit on thy brain;  
 My pity on thy heart, poor friend;  
 And from my fingers flow 5  
 The powers of life, and like a sign,  
 Seal thee from thine hour of woe;  
 And brood on thee, but may not  
 blend  
 With thine.

## II

'Sleep, sleep on! I love thee not; 10  
 But when I think that he  
 Who made and makes my lot  
 As full of flowers as thine of weeds,  
 Might have been lost like thee;  
 And that a hand which was not  
 mine 15  
 Might then have charmed his  
 agony  
 As I another's—my heart bleeds  
 For thine.

## III

'Sleep, sleep, and with the slumber  
 of  
 The dead and the unborn 20  
 Forget thy life and love;  
 Forget that thou must wake for-  
 ever;  
 Forget the world's dull scorn;  
 Forget lost health, and the divine  
 Feelings which died in youth's  
 brief morn; 25  
 And forget me, for I can never  
 Be thine.

## IV

'Like a cloud big with a May  
 shower,  
 My soul weeps healing rain  
 On thee, thou withered flower! 30  
 It breathes mute music on thy  
 sleep;  
 Its odour calms thy brain!  
 Its light within thy gloomy breast

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spreads like a second youth<br>again.<br>By mine thy being is to its deep 35<br>Possessed.<br>v<br>'The spell is done. How feel you<br>now?'<br>'Better—Quite well,' replied<br>The sleeper.—'What would do 39 | You good when suffering and<br>awake?<br>What cure your head and<br>side?—'<br>'What would cure, that would kill<br>me, Jane:<br>And as I must on earth abide<br>Awhile, yet tempt me not to break<br>My chain.' 45 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

LINES: 'WHEN THE LAMP IS SHATTERED'

I

WHEN the lamp is shattered  
 The light in the dust lies dead—  
 When the cloud is scattered  
 The rainbow's glory is shed.  
 When the lute is broken, 5  
 Sweet tones are remembered not;  
 When the lips have spoken,  
 Loved accents are soon forgot.

II

As music and splendour  
 Survive not the lamp and the  
 lute, 10  
 The heart's echoes render  
 No song when the spirit is mute:—  
 No song but sad dirges,  
 Like the wind through a ruined  
 cell,  
 Or the mournful surges 15  
 That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III

When hearts have once mingled  
 Love first leaves the well-built nest;  
 The weak one is singled  
 To endure what it once pos-  
 sessed. 20  
 O Love! who bewailest  
 The frailty of all things here,  
 Why choose you the frailest  
 For your cradle, your home, and  
 your bier?

IV

Its passions will rock thee 25  
 As the storms rock the ravens on  
 high;  
 Bright reason will mock thee,  
 Like the sun from a wintry sky.  
 From thy nest every rafter  
 Will rot, and thine eagle home 30  
 Leave thee naked to laughter,  
 When leaves fall and cold winds  
 come.

TO JANE: THE INVITATION

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BEST and brightest, come away!<br>Fairer far than this fair Day,<br>Which, like thee to those in sorrow,<br>Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow<br>To the rough Year just awake 5<br>In its cradle on the brake.<br>The brightest hour of unborn<br>Spring,<br>Through the winter wandering, | Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn<br>To hoar February born. 10<br>Bending from Heaven, in azure<br>mirth,<br>It kissed the forehead of the<br>Earth,<br>And smiled upon the silent sea,<br>And bade the frozen streams be<br>free, |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



And waked to music all their fountains, 15  
 And breathed upon the frozen mountains,  
 And like a prophetess of May  
 Strewed flowers upon the barren way,  
 Making the wintry world appear  
 Like one on whom thou smilest,  
 dear. 20

Away, away, from men and towns,  
 To the wild wood and the downs—  
 To the silent wilderness  
 Where the soul need not repress  
 Its music lest it should not find 25  
 An echo in another's mind,  
 While the touch of Nature's art  
 Harmonizes heart to heart.  
 I leave this notice on my door  
 For each accustomed visitor:— 30  
 'I am gone into the fields  
 To take what this sweet hour  
 yields,—  
 Reflection, you may come to-mor-  
 row,  
 Sit by the fireside with Sorrow.—  
 You with the unpaid bill, De-  
 spair,—  
 You, tiresome verse-reciter, 35  
 Care,—  
 I will pay you in the grave,—  
 Death will listen to your stave.  
 Expectation too, be off!

To-day is for itself enough; 40  
 Hope, in pity mock not Woe  
 With smiles, nor follow where I go;  
 Long having lived on thy sweet  
 food,  
 At length I find one moment's good  
 After long pain—with all your love,  
 This you never told me of.' 46

Radiant Sister of the Day,  
 Awake! arise! and come away!  
 To the wild woods and the plains,  
 And the pools where winter rains 50  
 Image all their roof of leaves,  
 Where the pine its garland weaves  
 Of sapless green and ivy dun  
 Round stems that never kiss the  
 sun;  
 Where the lawns and pastures be, 55  
 And the sandhills of the sea;—  
 Where the melting hoar-frost wets  
 The daisy-star that never sets,  
 And wind-flowers, and violets,  
 Which yet join not scent to hue, 60  
 Crown the pale year weak and new;  
 When the night is left behind,  
 In the deep east, dun and blind,  
 And the blue noon is over us,  
 And the multitudinous 65  
 Billows murmur at our feet,  
 Where the earth and ocean meet,  
 And all things seem only one  
 In the universal sun.

## TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION

## I

Now the last day of many days,  
 All beautiful and bright as thou,  
 The loveliest and the last, is  
 dead,  
 Rise, Memory, and write its praise!  
 Up,—to thy wonted work! come,  
 trace 5  
 The epitaph of glory fled,—

For now the Earth has changed its  
 face,  
 A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

## II

We wandered to the Pine Forest  
 That skirts the Ocean's foam, 10  
 The lightest wind was in its nest,  
 The tempest in its home.

The whispering waves were half  
 asleep,  
 The clouds were gone to play,  
 And on the bosom of the deep 15  
 The smile of Heaven lay;  
 It seemed as if the hour were one  
 Sent from beyond the skies,  
 Which scattered from above the  
 sun  
 A light of Paradise. 20

## III

We paused amid the pines that  
 stood  
 The giants of the waste,  
 Tortured by storms to shapes as  
 rude  
 As serpents interlaced,  
 And soothed by every azure breath,  
 That under Heaven is blown, 26  
 To harmonies and hues beneath,  
 As tender as its own;  
 Now all the tree-tops lay asleep,  
 Like green waves on the sea, 30  
 As still as in the silent deep  
 The ocean woods may be.

## IV

How calm it was!—the silence  
 there  
 By such a chain was bound  
 That even the busy woodpecker 35  
 Made stiller by her sound  
 The inviolable quietness;  
 The breath of peace we drew  
 With its soft motion made not less  
 The calm that round us grew. 40  
 There seemed from the remotest  
 seat  
 Of the white mountain waste,  
 To the soft flower beneath our feet,  
 A magic circle traced,—  
 A spirit interfused around, 45  
 A thrilling, silent life.—  
 To momentary peace it bound  
 Our mortal nature's strife;  
 And still I felt the centre of

The magic circle there 50  
 Was one fair form that filled with  
 love  
 The lifeless atmosphere.

## V

We paused beside the pools that lie  
 Under the forest bough.—  
 Each seemed as 'twere a little sky 55  
 Gulfed in a world below;  
 A firmament of purple light  
 Which in the dark earth lay,  
 More boundless than the depth of  
 night,  
 And purer than the day— 60  
 In which the lovely forests grew,  
 As in the upper air,  
 More perfect both in shape and hue  
 Than any spreading there.  
 There lay the glade and neighbour-  
 ing lawn, 65  
 And through the dark green wood  
 The white sun twinkling like the  
 dawn  
 Out of a speckled cloud.  
 Sweet views which in our world  
 above  
 Can never well be seen, 70  
 Were imaged by the water's love  
 Of that fair forest green.  
 And all was interfused beneath  
 With an Elysian glow,  
 An atmosphere without a breath, 75  
 A softer day below.  
 Like one beloved the scene had lent  
 To the dark water's breast,  
 Its every leaf and lineament  
 With more than truth expressed;  
 Until an envious wind crept by, 81  
 Like an unwelcome thought,  
 Which from the mind's too faithful  
 eye  
 Blots one dear image out.  
 Though thou art ever fair and kind,  
 The forests ever green, 86  
 Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,  
 Than calm in waters, seen.

## THE PINE FOREST OF THE CASCINE NEAR PISA

DEAREST, best and brightest,  
     Come away,  
 To the woods and to the fields!  
 Dearer than this fairest day  
 Which, like thee to those in sor-  
     row, 5  
 Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow  
 To the rough Year just awake  
 In its cradle in the brake.  
 The eldest of the Hours of Spring,  
 Into the Winter wandering, 10  
 Looks upon the leafless wood,  
 And the banks all bare and rude;  
 Found, it seems, this halcyon Morn  
 In February's bosom born,  
 Bending from Heaven, in azure  
     mirth, 15  
 Kissed the cold forehead of the  
     Earth,  
 And smiled upon the silent sea,  
 And bade the frozen streams be  
     free;  
 And waked to music all the foun-  
     tains,  
 And breathed upon the rigid moun-  
     tains, 20  
 And made the wintry world appear  
 Like one on whom thou smilest,  
     Dear.

Radiant Sister of the Day,  
 Awake! arise! and come away!  
 To the wild woods and the plains, 25  
 To the pools where winter rains  
 Image all the roof of leaves,  
 Where the pine its garland weaves  
 Sapless, gray, and ivy dun  
 Round stems that never kiss the  
     sun— 30

To the sandhills of the sea,  
 Where the earliest violets be.

Now the last day of many days,  
 All beautiful and bright as thou,  
 The loveliest and the last, is  
     dead, 35

Rise, Memory, and write its praise!  
 And do thy wonted work and trace  
 The epitaph of glory fled;  
 For now the Earth has changed its  
     face,  
 A frown is on the Heaven's brow. 40

We wandered to the Pine Forest  
     That skirts the Ocean's foam,  
 The lightest wind was in its nest,  
     The tempest in its home.

The whispering waves were half  
     asleep, 45  
     The clouds were gone to play,  
 And on the woods, and on the deep  
     The smile of Heaven lay.

It seemed as if the day were one  
     Sent from beyond the skies, 50  
 Which shed to earth above the sun  
     A light of Paradise.

We paused amid the pines that  
     stood,  
     The giants of the waste,  
 Tortured by storms to shapes as  
     rude 55  
     With stems like serpents inter-  
     laced.

How calm it was—the silence there  
     By such a chain was bound,  
 That even the busy woodpecker  
     Made stiller by her sound 60

The inviolable quietness;  
     The breath of peace we drew  
 With its soft motion made not less  
     The calm that round us grew.

It seemed that from the remotest  
     seat 65  
     Of the white mountain's waste  
 To the bright flower beneath our  
     feet,  
     A magic circle traced;—

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| <p>A spirit interfused around,<br/>         A thinking, silent life; 70<br/>         To momentary peace it bound<br/>         Our mortal nature's strife;—<br/>         And still, it seemed, the centre of<br/>         The magic circle there,<br/>         \Was one whose being filled with<br/>         love<br/>         The breathless atmosphere. 76<br/>         \Were not the crocuses that grew<br/>         Under that ilex-tree<br/>         As beautiful in scent and hue<br/>         As ever fed the bee? 80<br/>         \We stood beneath the pools that lie<br/>         Under the forest bough,<br/>         And each seemed like a sky<br/>         Gulfed in a world below;<br/>         A purple firmament of light 85<br/>         Which in the dark earth lay,<br/>         More boundless than the depth of<br/>         night,<br/>         And clearer than the day—<br/>         In which the massy forests grew<br/>         As in the upper air, 90<br/>         More perfect both in shape and hue<br/>         Than any waving there.<br/>         Like one beloved the scene had lent<br/>         To the dark water's breast</p> | <p>Its every leaf and lineament 95<br/>         With that clear truth expressed;<br/>         There lay far glades and neighbour-<br/>         ing lawn,<br/>         And through the dark green<br/>         crowd<br/>         The white sun twinkling like the<br/>         dawn<br/>         Under a speckled cloud. 106<br/>         Sweet views, which in our world<br/>         above<br/>         Can never well be seen,<br/>         Were imaged by the water's love<br/>         Of that fair forest green.<br/>         And all was interfused beneath 109<br/>         With an Elysian air,<br/>         An atmosphere without a breath,<br/>         A silence sleeping there.<br/>         Until a wandering wind crept by,<br/>         Like an unwelcome thought, 110<br/>         Which from my mind's too faithful<br/>         eye<br/>         Blots thy bright image out.<br/>         For thou art good and dear and<br/>         kind,<br/>         The forest ever green,<br/>         But less of peace in S——'s mind,<br/>         Than calm in waters, seen. 116</p> |
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### WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>ARIEL to Miranda:—Take<br/>         This slave of Music, for the sake<br/>         Of him who is the slave of thee,<br/>         And teach it all the harmony<br/>         In which thou canst, and only thou,<br/>         Make the delighted spirit glow, 6<br/>         Till joy denies itself again,<br/>         And, too intense, is turned to pain;<br/>         For by permission and command<br/>         Of thine own Prince Ferdinand, 10<br/>         Poor Ariel sends this silent token<br/>         Of more than ever can be spoken;<br/>         Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,<br/>         From life to life, must still pursue</p> | <p>Your happiness;—for thus alone 15<br/>         Can Ariel ever find his own.<br/>         From Prospero's enchanted cell,<br/>         As the mighty verses tell,<br/>         To the throne of Naples, he<br/>         Lit you o'er the trackless sea, 20<br/>         Flitting on, your prow before,<br/>         Like a living meteor.<br/>         When you die, the silent Moon,<br/>         In her interlunar swoon,<br/>         Is not sadder in her cell 25<br/>         Than deserted Ariel.<br/>         When you live again on earth,<br/>         Like an unseen star of birth,</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Ariel guides you o'er the sea  
 Of life from your nativity. 30  
 Many changes have been run  
 Since Ferdinand and you begun  
 Your course of love, and Ariel still  
 Has tracked your steps, and served  
     your will;  
 Now, in humbler, happier lot, 35  
 This is all remembered not;  
 And now, alas! the poor sprite is  
 Imprisoned, for some fault of his,  
 In a body like a grave;—  
 From you he only dares to crave, 40  
 For his service and his sorrow,  
 A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought,  
 To echo all harmonious thought,  
 Felled a tree, while on the steep 45  
 The woods were in their winter  
     sleep,  
 Rocked in that repose divine  
 On the wind-swept Apennine;  
 And dreaming, some of Autumn  
     past,  
 And some of Spring approaching 50  
     fast,  
 And some of April buds and show-  
     ers,  
 And some of songs in July bowers,  
 And all of love; and so this tree,—  
 O that such our death may be!—  
 Died in sleep, and felt no pain, 55  
 To live in happier form again:  
 From which, beneath Heaven's fair-  
     est star,

The artist wrought this loved  
     Guitar,  
 And taught it justly to reply,  
 To all who question skilfully, 60  
 In language gentle as thine own;  
 Whispering in enamoured tone  
 Sweet oracles of woods and dells,  
 And summer winds in sylvan cells;  
 For it had learned all harmonies 65  
 Of the plains and of the skies,  
 Of the forests and the mountains,  
 And the many-voicèd fountains;  
 The clearest echoes of the hills,  
 The softest notes of falling rills, 70  
 The melodies of birds and bees,  
 The murmuring of summer seas,  
 And pattering rain, and breathing  
     dew,  
 And airs of evening; and it knew  
 That seldom-heard mysterious 75  
     sound,  
 Which, driven on its diurnal round,  
 As it floats through boundless day,  
 Our world enkindles on its way.—  
 All this it knows, but will not tell  
 To those who cannot question well  
 The Spirit that inhabits it; 81  
 It talks according to the wit  
 Of its companions; and no more  
 Is heard than has been felt before,  
 By those who tempt it to betray 85  
 These secrets of an elder day:  
 But, sweetly as its answers will  
 Flatter hands of perfect skill,  
 It keeps its highest, holiest tone  
 For our beloved Jane alone. 90

### TO JANE: 'THE KEEN STARS WERE TWINKLING'

#### I

THE keen stars were twinkling,  
 And the fair moon was rising among  
     them,  
 Dear Jane!  
 The guitar was tinkling,

But the notes were not sweet till  
     you sung them 5  
 Again.

#### II

As the moon's soft splendour  
 O'er the faint cold starlight of  
     Heaven

Is thrown,  
 So your voice most tender 10  
 To the strings without soul had  
 then given  
 Its own.

## III

The stars will awaken,  
 Though the moon sleep a full hour  
 later,  
 To-night; 15  
 No leaf will be shaken

Whilst the dews of your melody  
 scatter  
 Delight.

## IV

Though the sound overpowers,  
 Sing again, with your dear voice  
 revealing 20  
 A tone  
 Of some world far from ours,  
 Where music and moonlight and  
 feeling  
 Are one.

## A DIRGE

ROUGH wind, that moanest loud  
 Grief too sad for song;  
 Wild wind, when sullen cloud  
 Knells all the night long;

Sad storm, whose tears are vain, 5  
 Bare woods, whose branches strain,  
 Deep caves and dreary main,—  
 Wail, for the world's wrong!

## LINES WRITTEN IN THE BAY OF LERICI

SHE left me at the silent time  
 When the moon had ceased to climb  
 The azure path of Heaven's steep,  
 And like an albatross asleep,  
 Balanced on her wings of light, 5  
 Hovered in the purple night,  
 Ere she sought her ocean nest  
 In the chambers of the West.  
 She left me, and I stayed alone  
 Thinking over every tone 10  
 Which, though silent to the ear,  
 The enchanted heart could hear,  
 Like notes which die when born, but  
 still  
 Haunt the echoes of the hill;  
 And feeling ever—oh, too much!—  
 The soft vibration of her touch, 16  
 As if her gentle hand, even now,  
 Lightly trembled on my brow;  
 And thus, although she absent were,  
 Memory gave me all of her 20  
 That even Fancy dares to claim:—  
 Her presence had made weak and  
 tame  
 All passions, and I lived alone  
 In the time which is our own;

The past and future were forgot, 25  
 As they had been, and would be,  
 not.  
 But soon, the guardian angel gone,  
 The daemon reassumed his throne  
 In my faint heart. I dare not speak  
 My thoughts, but thus disturbed  
 and weak 30  
 I sat and saw the vessels glide  
 Over the ocean bright and wide,  
 Like spirit-wingèd chariots sent  
 O'er some serenest element  
 For ministrations strange and 35  
 far;  
 As if to some Elysian star  
 Sailed for drink to medicine  
 Such sweet and bitter pain as mine.  
 And the wind that winged their  
 flight  
 From the land came fresh and light,  
 And the scent of wingèd flowers, 41  
 And the coolness of the hours  
 Of dew, and sweet warmth left by  
 day.  
 Were scattered o'er the twinkling  
 day,

And the fisher with his lamp 45  
 And spear about the low rocks  
     damp  
 Crept, and struck the fish which  
     came  
 To worship the delusive flame.

Too happy they, whose pleasure  
     sought  
 Extinguishes all sense and thought  
 Of the regret that pleasure leaves, 51  
 Destroying life alone, not peace!

## LINES: 'WE MEET NOT AS WE PARTED'

## I

We meet not as we parted,  
 We feel more than all may see;  
 My bosom is heavy-hearted,  
 And thine full of doubt for me:—  
 One moment has bound the  
     free. 5

## II

That moment is gone for ever,  
 Like lightning that flashed and  
     died—  
 Like a snowflake upon the river—  
 Like a sunbeam upon the tide,  
 Which the dark shadows hide. 10

## III

That moment from time was singled  
 As the first of a life of pain;  
 The cup of its joy was mingled

—Delusion too sweet though  
     vain!

Too sweet to be mine again. 15

## IV

Sweet lips, could my heart have  
     hidden

That its life was crushed by you,  
 Ye would not have then forbidden  
 The death which a heart so true  
 Sought in your briny dew. 20

## V

. . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . .

Methinks too little cost  
 For a moment so found, so  
     lost! 25

## THE ISLE

THERE was a little lawny islet  
 By anemone and violet,  
     Like mosaic, paven:  
 And its roof was flowers and leaves  
 Which the summer's breath en-  
     weaves, 5  
 Where nor sun nor showers nor  
     breeze

Pierce the pines and tallest trees,  
     Each a gem engraven;—  
 Girt by many an azure wave  
 With which the clouds and moun-  
     tains pave 10  
 A lake's blue chasm.

## FRAGMENT: TO THE MOON

BRIGHT wanderer, fair coquette of  
     Heaven,  
 To whom alone it has been given  
 To change and be adored for ever,

Envy not this dim world, for  
     never  
 But once within its shadow grew 5  
 One fair as ——

## EPITAPH

|                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>THESE are two friends whose lives<br/>were undivided;<br/>So let their memory be, now they<br/>have glided</p> | <p>Under the grave; let not their bones<br/>be parted,<br/>For their two hearts in life were<br/>single-hearted.</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## NOTE ON POEMS OF 1822, BY MRS. SHELLEY

THUS morn thy gallant bark  
 Sailed on a sunny sea:  
 'Tis noon, and tempests dark  
 Have wrecked it on the lee.  
 Ah woe! ah woe!  
 By Spirits of the deep  
 Thou'rt cradled on the billow  
 To thy eternal sleep.  
 Thou sleep'st upon the shore  
 Beside the knelling surge,  
 And Sea-nymphs evermore  
 Shall sadly chant thy dirge.  
 They come, they come,  
 The Spirits of the deep,—  
 While near thy seaweed pillow  
 My lonely watch I keep.  
 From far across the sea  
 I hear a loud lament,  
 By Echo's voice for thee  
 From Ocean's caverns sent.  
 O list! O list!  
 The Spirits of the deep!  
 They raise a wail of sorrow,  
 While I forever weep.

WITH this last year of the life of Shelley these Notes end. They are not what I intended them to be. I began with energy, and a burning desire to impart to the world, in worthy language, the sense I have of the virtues and genius of the beloved and the lost; my strength has failed under the task. Recurrence to the past, full of its own deep and unforgotten joys and sorrows, contrasted with succeeding years of painful and solitary struggle, has shaken my health. Days of great suffering have followed my attempts to write, and these again produced a weakness and languor that spread their sinister influence over these notes. I dislike speaking of myself, but cannot help apologizing to the dead, and to the public, for not having executed in the manner I desired the history I engaged to give of Shelley's writings.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I at one time feared that the correction of the press might be less exact through my illness; but I believe that it is nearly free from error. Some asterisks occur in a few pages, as they did in the volume of *Posthumous Poems*, either because they refer to private concerns, or because the original manuscript was left imperfect. Did any one see the papers from which I drew that volume, the wonder would be how any eyes or patience were capable of extracting it from so confused a mass, interlined and broken into fragments, so that the sense could only be deciphered and joined by guesses which might seem rather intuitive than founded on reasoning. Yet I believe no mistake was made.



The winter of 1822 was passed in Pisa, if we might call that season winter in which autumn merged into spring after the interval of but few days of bleaker weather. Spring sprang up early, and with extreme beauty. Shelley had conceived the idea of writing a tragedy on the subject of Charles I. It was one that he believed adapted for a drama; full of intense interest, contrasted character, and busy passion. He had recommended it long before, when he encouraged me to attempt a play. Whether the subject proved more difficult than he anticipated, or whether in fact he could not bend his mind away from the broodings and wanderings of thought, divested from human interest, which he best loved, I cannot tell; but he proceeded slowly, and threw it aside for one of the most mystical of his poems, the *Triumph of Life*, on which he was employed at the last.

His passion for boating was fostered at this time by having among our friends several sailors. His favourite companion, Edward Ellerker Williams, of the 8th Light Dragoons, had begun his life in the navy, and had afterwards entered the army; he had spent several years in India, and his love for adventure and manly exercises accorded with Shelley's taste. It was their favourite plan to build a boat such as they could manage themselves, and, living on the sea-coast, to enjoy at every hour and season the pleasure they loved best. Captain Roberts, R.N., undertook to build the boat at Genoa, where he was also occupied in building the *Bolivar* for Lord Byron. Ours was to be an open boat, on a model taken from one of the royal dockyards. I have since heard that there was a defect in this model, and that it was never seaworthy. In the month of February, Shelley and his friend went to Spezia to seek for houses for us. Only one was to be found at all suitable; however, a trifle such as not finding a house could not stop Shelley; the one found was to serve for all. It was unfurnished; we sent our furniture by sea, and with a good deal of precipitation, arising from his impatience, made our removal. We left Pisa on the 26th of April.

The Bay of Spezia is of considerable extent, and divided by a rocky promontory into a larger and smaller one. The town of Lerici is situated on the eastern point, and in the depth of the smaller bay, which bears the name of this town, is the village of San Terenzo. Our house, Casa Magni, was close to this village; the sea came up to the door, a steep hill sheltered it behind. The proprietor of the estate on which it was situated was insane; he had begun to erect a large house at the summit of the hill behind, but his malady prevented its being finished, and it was falling into ruin. He had (and this to the Italians had seemed a glaring symptom of very decided madness) rooted up the olives on the hillside, and planted forest trees. These were mostly young, but the plantation was more in English taste than I ever elsewhere saw in Italy; some fine walnut and ilex trees intermingled their dark massy foliage, and formed groups which still haunt my memory, as then they satiated the eye with a sense of loveliness. The scene was indeed of unimaginable beauty. The blue extent of waters, the almost landlocked

bay, the near castle of Lerici shutting it in to the east, and distant Porto Venere to the west; the varied forms of the precipitous rocks that bound in the beach, over which there was only a winding rugged footpath towards Lerici, and none on the other side; the tideless sea leaving no sands nor shingle, formed a picture such as one sees in Salvator Rosa's landscapes only. Sometimes the sunshine vanished when the sirocco raged—the 'ponente' the wind was called on that shore. The gales and squalls that hailed our first arrival surrounded the bay with foam; the howling wind swept round our exposed house, and the sea roared unremittingly, so that we almost fancied ourselves on board ship. At other times sunshine and calm invested sea and sky, and the rich tints of Italian heaven bathed the scene in bright and ever-varying tints.

The natives were wilder than the place. Our near neighbours of San Terenzo were more like savages than any people I ever before lived among. Many a night they passed on the beach, singing, or rather howling; the women dancing about among the waves that broke at their feet, the men leaning against the rocks and joining in their loud wild chorus. We could get no provisions nearer than Sarzana, at a distance of three miles and a half off, with the torrent of the Magra between; and even there the supply was very deficient. Had we been wrecked on an island of the South Seas, we could scarcely have felt ourselves farther from civilization and comfort; but, where the sun shines, the latter becomes an unnecessary luxury, and we had enough society among ourselves. Yet I confess housekeeping became rather a toilsome task, especially as I was suffering in my health, and could not exert myself actively.

At first the fatal boat had not arrived, and was expected with great impatience. On Monday, 12th May, it came. Williams records the long-wished-for fact in his journal: 'Cloudy and threatening weather. M. Maglian called; and after dinner, and while walking with him on the terrace, we discovered a strange sail coming round the point of Porto Venere, which proved at length to be Shelley's boat. She had left Genoa on Thursday last, but had been driven back by the prevailing bad winds. A Mr. Heslop and two English seamen brought her round, and they speak most highly of her performances. She does indeed excite my surprise and admiration. Shelley and I walked to Lerici, and made a stretch off the land to try her: and I find she fetches whatever she looks at. In short, we have now a perfect plaything for the summer.'—It was thus that short-sighted mortals welcomed Death, he having disguised his grim form in a pleasing mask! The time of the friends was now spent on the sea; the weather became fine, and our whole party often passed the evenings on the water when the wind promised pleasant sailing. Shelley and Williams made longer excursions; they sailed several times to Massa. They had engaged one of the seamen who brought her round, a boy, by name Charles Vivian; and they had not the slightest apprehension of danger. When the weather was unfavourable, they employed themselves with alterations in the rigging, and by building a boat of canvas and reeds, as light as possible, to have on board the

other for the convenience of landing in waters too shallow for the larger vessel. When Shelley was on board, he had his papers with him; and much of the *Triumph of Life* was written as he sailed or weltered on that sea which was soon to engulf him.

The heats set in in the middle of June; the days became excessively hot. But the sea-breeze cooled the air at noon, and extreme heat always put Shelley in spirits. A long drought had preceded the heat; and prayers for rain were being put up in the churches, and processions of relics for the same effect took place in every town. At this time we received letters announcing the arrival of Leigh Hunt at Genoa. Shelley was very eager to see him. I was confined to my room by severe illness, and could not move; it was agreed that Shelley and Williams should go to Leghorn in the boat. Strange that no fear of danger crossed our minds! Living on the sea-shore, the ocean became as a plaything: as a child may sport with a lighted stick, till a spark inflames a forest, and spreads destruction over all, so did we fearlessly and blindly tamper with danger, and make a game of the terrors of the ocean. Our Italian neighbours, even, trusted themselves as far as Massa in the skiff; and the running down the line of coast to Leghorn gave no more notion of peril than a fair-weather inland navigation would have done to those who had never seen the sea. Once, some months before, Trelawny had raised a warning voice as to the difference of our calm bay and the open sea beyond; but Shelley and his friend, with their one sailor-boy, thought themselves a match for the storms of the Mediterranean, in a boat which they looked upon as equal to all it was put to do.

On the 1st of July they left us. If ever shadow of future ill darkened the present hour, such was over my mind when they went. During the whole of our stay at Lerici, an intense presentiment of coming evil brooded over my mind, and covered this beautiful place and genial summer with the shadow of coming misery. I had vainly struggled with these emotions—they seemed accounted for by my illness; but at this hour of separation they recurred with renewed violence. I did not anticipate danger for them, but a vague expectation of evil shook me to agony, and I could scarcely bring myself to let them go. The day was calm and clear; and, a fine breeze rising at twelve, they weighed for Leghorn. They made the run of about fifty miles in seven hours and a half. The *Bolivar* was in port; and, the regulations of the Health-office not permitting them to go on shore after sunset, they borrowed cushions from the larger vessel, and slept on board their boat.

They spent a week at Pisa and Leghorn. The want of rain was severely felt in the country. The weather continued sultry and fine. I have heard that Shelley all this time was in brilliant spirits. Not long before, talking of presentiment, he had said the only one that he ever found infallible was the certain advent of some evil fortune when he felt peculiarly joyous. Yet, if ever fate whispered of coming disaster, such inaudible but not unfelt prognostics hovered around us. The beauty of the place seemed unearthly in its excess; the distance we were at from all signs

of civilization, the sea at our feet, its murmurs or its roaring for ever in our ears,—all these things led the mind to brood over strange thoughts, and, lifting it from everyday life, caused it to be familiar with the unreal. A sort of spell surrounded us; and each day, as the voyagers did not return, we grew restless and disquieted, and yet, strange to say, we were not fearful of the most apparent danger.

The spell snapped; it was all over; an interval of agonizing doubt—of days passed in miserable journeys to gain tidings, of hopes that took firmer root even as they were more baseless—was changed to the certainty of the death that eclipsed all happiness for the survivors for evermore.

There was something in our fate peculiarly harrowing. The remains of those we lost were cast on shore; but, by the quarantine-laws of the coast, we were not permitted to have possession of them—the law with respect to everything cast on land by the sea being that such should be burned, to prevent the possibility of any remnant bringing the plague into Italy; and no representation could alter the law. At length, through the kind and unwearied exertions of Mr. Dawkins, our Chargé d’Affaires at Florence, we gained permission to receive the ashes after the bodies were consumed. Nothing could equal the zeal of Trelawny in carrying our wishes into effect. He was indefatigable in his exertions, and full of forethought and sagacity in his arrangements. It was a fearful task; he stood before us at last, his hands scorched and blistered by the flames of the funeral-pyre, and by touching the burnt relics as he placed them in the receptacle prepared for the purpose. And there, in compass of that small case, was gathered all that remained on earth of him whose genius and virtue were a crown of glory to the world—whose love had been the source of happiness, peace, and good,—to be buried with him!

The concluding stanzas of the *Adonais* pointed out where the remains ought to be deposited; in addition to which our beloved child lay buried in the cemetery at Rome. Thither Shelley’s ashes were conveyed; and they rest beneath one of the antique weed-grown towers that recur at intervals in the circuit of the massy ancient wall of Rome. He selected the hallowed place himself; there is

‘the sepulchre,  
Oh, not of him, but of our joy!—

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time  
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;  
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,  
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned  
This refuge for his memory, doth stand  
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,  
A field is spread, on which a newer band  
Have pitched in Heaven’s smile their camp of death,  
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.’

Could sorrow for the lost, and shuddering anguish at the vacancy left behind, be soothed by poetic imaginations, there was something in Shelley’s fate to mitigate pangs which yet, alas! could not be so miti-

gated; for hard reality brings too miserably home to the mourner all that is lost of happiness, all of lonely unsolaced struggle that remains. Still, though dreams and hues of poetry cannot blunt grief, it invests his fate with a sublime fitness, which those less nearly allied may regard with complacency. A year before he had poured into verse all such ideas about death as give it a glory of its own. He had, as it now seems, almost anticipated his own destiny; and, when the mind figures his skiff wrapped from sight by the thunder-storm, as it was last seen upon the purple sea, and then, as the cloud of the tempest passed away, no sign remained of where it had been <sup>1</sup>—who but will regard as a prophecy the last stanza of the *Adonais*?

'The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,  
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;  
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!  
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;  
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,  
The soul of Adonais, like a star,

PUTNEY, *May 1*, 1839.

## TRANSLATIONS

## HYMN TO MERCURY

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF HOMER

# I

SING, Muse, the son of Maia and of Jove,  
The Herald-child, king of Arcadia  
And all its pastoral hills, whom in sweet love  
Having been interwoven, modest May  
Bore Heaven's dread Supreme. An antique grove  
Shadowed the cavern where the lovers lay  
In the deep night, unseen by Gods or Men,  
And white-armed Juno slumbered sweetly then.

5

<sup>1</sup> Captain Roberts watched the vessel with his glass from the top of the light-house of Leghorn, on its homeward track. They were off Via Reggio, at some distance from shore, when a storm was driven over the sea. It enveloped them and several larger vessels in darkness. When the cloud passed onwards, Roberts looked again, and saw every other vessel sailing on the ocean except their little schooner, which had vanished. From that time he could scarcely doubt the fatal truth; yet we fancied that they might have been driven towards Elba or Corsica, and so be saved. The observation made as to the spot where the boat disappeared caused it to be found, through the exertions of Trelawny for that effect. It had gone down in ten fathom water; it had not capsized, and, except such things as had floated from her, everything was found on board exactly as it had been placed when they sailed. The boat itself was uninjured. Roberts possessed himself of her, and decked her; but she proved not seaworthy, and her shattered planks now lie rotting on the shore of one of the Ionian islands, on which she was wrecked.

## II

Now, when the joy of Jove had its fulfilling,  
 And Heaven's tenth moon chronicled her relief, 10  
 She gave to light a babe all babes excelling,  
 A schemer subtle beyond all belief;  
 A shepherd of thin dreams, a cow-stealing,  
 A night-watching, and door-waylaying thief,  
 Who 'mongst the Gods was soon about to thieve, 15  
 And other glorious actions to achieve.

## III

The babe was born at the first peep of day;  
 He began playing on the lyre at noon,  
 And the same evening did he steal away  
 Apollo's herds;—the fourth day of the moon 20  
 On which him bore the venerable May,  
 From her immortal limbs he leaped full soon,  
 Nor long could in the sacred cradle keep,  
 But out to seek Apollo's herds would creep.

## IV

Out of the lofty cavern wandering 25  
 He found a tortoise, and cried out—'A treasure!'  
 (For Mercury first made the tortoise sing)  
 The beast before the portal at his leisure  
 The flowery herbage was depasturing,  
 Moving his feet in a deliberate measure 30  
 Over the turf. Jove's profitable son  
 Eying him laughed, and laughing thus begun:—

## V

'A useful godsend are you to me now,  
 King of the dance, companion of the feast,  
 Lovely in all your nature! Welcome, you 35  
 Excellent plaything! Where, sweet mountain-beast,  
 Got you that speckled shell? Thus much I know,  
 You must come home with me and be my guest;  
 You will give joy to me, and I will do  
 All that is in my power to honour you. 40

## VI

'Better to be at home than out of door,  
 So come with me; and though it has been said  
 That you alive defend from magic power,  
 I know you will sing sweetly when you're dead.'

Thus having spoken, the quaint infant bore,  
 Lifting it from the grass on which it fed  
 And grasping it in his delighted hold,  
 His treasured prize into the cavern old.

45

## VII

Then scooping with a chisel of gray steel,  
 He bored the life and soul out of the beast.—  
 Not swifter a swift thought of woe or weal  
 Darts through the tumult of a human breast  
 Which thronging cares annoy—not swifter wheel  
 The flashes of its torture and unrest  
 Out of the dizzy eyes—than Maia's son  
 All that he did devise hath featly done.

50

53

## VIII

And through the tortoise's hard stony skin  
 At proper distances small holes he made,  
 And fastened the cut stems of reeds within,  
 And with a piece of leather overlaid  
 The open space and fixed the cubits in,  
 Fitting the bridge to both, and stretched o'er all  
 Symphonious cords of sheep-gut rhythmical.

60

## IX

When he had wrought the lovely instrument,  
 He tried the chords, and made division meet,  
 Preluding with the plectrum, and there went  
 Up from beneath his hand a tumult sweet  
 Of mighty sounds, and from his lips he sent  
 A strain of unpremeditated wit  
 Joyous and wild and wanton—such you may  
 Hear among revellers on a holiday.

65

70

## X

He sung how Jove and May of the bright sandal  
 Dallied in love not quite legitimate;  
 And his own birth, still scoffing at the scandal,  
 And naming his own name, did celebrate;  
 His mother's cave and servant maids he planned all  
 In plastic verse, her household stuff and state,  
 Perennial pot, trippet, and brazen pan,—  
 But singing, he conceived another plan.

75

## XI

Seized with a sudden fancy for fresh meat, 80  
 He in his sacred crib deposited  
 The hollow lyre, and from the cavern sweet  
 Rushed with great leaps up to the mountain's head,  
 Revolving in his mind some subtle feat  
 Of thievish craft, such as a swindler might 85  
 Devise in the lone season of dun night.

## XII

Lo! the great Sun under the ocean's bed has  
 Driven steeds and chariot—the child meanwhile strode  
 O'er the Pierian mountains clothed in shadows,  
 Where the immortal oxen of the God 90  
 Are pastured in the flowering unmown meadows,  
 And safely stalled in a remote abode.—  
 The archer Argicide, elate and proud,  
 Drove fifty from the herd, lowing aloud.

## XIII

He drove them wandering o'er the sandy way, 95  
 But, being ever mindful of his craft,  
 Backward and forward drove he them astray,  
 So that the tracks which seemed before, were aft;  
 His sandals then he threw to the ocean spray,  
 And for each foot he wrought a kind of raft 100  
 Of tamarisk, and tamarisk-like sprigs,  
 And bound them in a lump with withy twigs.

## XIV

And on his feet he tied these sandals light,  
 The trail of whose wide leaves might not betray  
 His track; and then, a self-sufficing wight, 105  
 Like a man hastening on some distant way,  
 He from Pieria's mountain bent his flight;  
 But an old man perceived the infant pass  
 Down green Onchestus heaped like beds with grass.

## XV

The old man stood dressing his sunny vine: 110  
 'Halloo! old fellow with the crooked shoulder!  
 You grub those stumps? before they will bear wine  
 Methinks even you must grow a little older:



Attend, I pray, to this advice of mine,  
 As you would 'scape what might appal a bolder—  
 Seeing, see not—and hearing, hear not—and—  
 If you have understanding—understand.'

115

## XVI

So saying, Hermes roused the oxen vast;  
 O'er shadowy mountain and resounding dell,  
 And flower-paven plains, great Hermes passed;  
 Till the black night divine, which favouring fell  
 Around his steps, grew gray, and morning fast  
 Wakened the world to work, and from her cell  
 Sea-strewn, the Pallantean Moon sublime  
 Into her watch-tower just began to climb.

120

125

## XVII

Now to Alpheus he had driven all  
 The broad-foreheaded oxen of the Sun;  
 They came unwearied to the lofty stall  
 And to the water-troughs which ever run  
 Through the fresh fields—and when with rushgrass tall,  
 Lotus and all sweet herbage, every one  
 Had pastured been, the great God made them move  
 Towards the stall in a collected drove.

130

## XVIII

A mighty pile of wood the God then heaped,  
 And having soon conceived the mystery  
 Of fire, from two smooth laurel branches stripped  
 The bark, and rubbed them in his palms;—on high  
 Suddenly forth the burning vapour leaped  
 And the divine child saw delightedly.—  
 Mercury first found out for human weal  
 Tinder-box, matches, fire-irons, flint and steel.

135

140

## XIX

And fine dry logs and roots innumerable  
 He gathered in a delve upon the ground—  
 And kindled them—and instantaneous  
 The strength of the fierce flame was breathed around:  
 And whilst the might of glorious Vulcan thus  
 Wrapped the great pile with glare and roaring sound,  
 Hermes dragged forth two heifers, lowing loud,  
 Close to the fire—such might was in the God.

145

## XX

And on the earth upon their backs he threw 150  
 The panting beasts, and rolled them o'er and o'er,  
 And bored their lives out. Without more ado  
 He cut fat and flesh, and down before  
 The fire, on spits of wood he placed the two,  
 Toasting their flesh and ribs, and all the gore 155  
 Pursed in the bowels; and while this was done  
 He stretched their hides over a craggy stone.

## XXI

We mortals let an ox grow old, and then  
 Cut it up after long consideration,—  
 But joyous-minded Hermes from the glen 160  
 Drew the fat spoils to the more open station  
 Of a flat smooth space, and portioned them; and when  
 He had by lot assigned to each a ration  
 Of the twelve Gods, his mind became aware  
 Of all the joys which in religion are. 165

## XXII

For the sweet savour of the roasted meat  
 Tempted him though immortal. Natheless  
 He checked his haughty will and did not eat,  
 Though what it cost him words can scarce express,  
 And every wish to put such morsels sweet 170  
 Down his most sacred throat, he did repress;  
 But soon within the lofty portalled stall  
 He placed the fat and flesh and bones and all.

## XXIII

And every trace of the fresh butchery  
 And cooking, the God soon made disappear, 175  
 As if it all had vanished through the sky;  
 He burned the hoofs and horns and head and hair,—  
 The insatiate fire devoured them hungrily;—  
 And when he saw that everything was clear,  
 He quenched the coal, and trampled the black dust, 180  
 And in the stream his bloody sandals tossed.

## XXIV

All night he worked in the serene moonshine—  
 But when the light of day was spread abroad  
 He sought his natal mountain-peaks divine.  
 On his long wandering neither Man nor God 185

Had met him, since he killed Apollo's kine,  
 Nor house-dog had barked at him on his road;  
 Now he obliquely through the keyhole passed,  
 Like a thin mist, or an autumnal blast.

## XXV

Right through the temple of the spacious cave 190  
 He went with soft light feet—as if his tread  
 Fell not on earth; no sound their falling gave;  
 Then to his cradle he crept quick, and spread  
 The swaddling-clothes about him; and the knave  
 Lay playing with the covering of the bed 195  
 With his left hand about his knees—the right  
 Held his beloved tortoise-lyre tight.

## XXVI

There he lay innocent as a new-born child,  
 As gossips say; but though he was a God,  
 The Goddess, his fair mother, unbeguiled, 200  
 Knew all that he had done being abroad:  
 'Whence come you, and from what adventure wild,  
 You cunning rogue, and where have you abode  
 All the long night, clothed in your impudence?  
 What have you done since you departed hence? 205

## XXVII

'Apollo soon will pass within this gate  
 And bind your tender body in a chain  
 Inextricably tight, and fast as fate,  
 Unless you can delude the God again,  
 Even when within his arms—ah, runagate! 210  
 A pretty torment both for Gods and Men  
 Your father made when he made you!'—'Dear mother,'  
 Replied sly Hermes, 'wherefore scold and bother?

## XXVIII

'As if I were like other babes as old,  
 And understood nothing of what is what; 215  
 And cared at all to hear my mother scold.  
 I in my subtle brain a scheme have got,  
 Which whilst the sacred stars round Heaven are rolled  
 Will profit you and me—nor shall our lot  
 Be as you counsel, without gifts or food, 220  
 To spend our lives in this obscure abode.

## XXIX

'But we will leave this shadow-peopled cave  
 And live among the Gods, and pass each day  
 In high communion, sharing what they have  
 Of profuse wealth and unexhausted prey; 225  
 And from the portion which my father gave  
 To Phoebus, I will snatch my share away,  
 Which if my father will not—natheless I,  
 Who am the king of robbers, can but try.

## XXX

'And, if Latona's son should find me out, 230  
 I'll countermine him by a deeper plan;  
 I'll pierce the Pythian temple-walls, though stout,  
 And sack the fane of everything I can—  
 Caldrons and tripods of great worth no doubt,  
 Each golden cup and polished brazen pan, 235  
 All the wrought tapestries and garments gay.'—  
 So they together talked;—meanwhile the Day

## XXXI

Aethereal born arose out of the flood  
 Of flowing Ocean, bearing light to men.  
 Apollo passed toward the sacred wood, 240  
 Which from the inmost depths of its green glen  
 Echoes the voice of Neptune,—and there stood  
 On the same spot in green Onchestus then  
 That same old animal, the vine-dresser,  
 Who was employed hedging his vineyard there. 245

## XXXII

Latona's glorious Son began:—'I pray  
 Tell, ancient hedger of Onchestus green,  
 Whether a drove of kine has passed this way,  
 All heifers with crooked horns? for they have been 250  
 Stolen from the herd in high Pieria,  
 Where a black bull was fed apart, between  
 Two woody mountains in a neighbouring glen,  
 And four fierce dogs watched there, unanimous as men.

## XXXIII

'And what is strange, the author of this theft  
 Has stolen the fatted heifers every one, 255  
 But the four dogs and the black bull are left:—  
 Stolen they were last night at set of sun,

Of their soft beds and their sweet food bereft.—

Now tell me, man born ere the world begun,

Have you seen any one pass with the cows?'—

To whom the man of overhanging brows:

260

## XXXIV

'My friend, it would require no common skill

Justly to speak of everything I see:

On various purposes of good or ill

Many pass by my vineyard,—and to me

'Tis difficult to know the invisible

Thoughts, which in all those many minds may be:—

Thus much alone I certainly can say,

I tilled these vines till the decline of day,

265

## XXXV

'And then I thought I saw, but dare not speak

With certainty of such a wondrous thing,

A child, who could not have been born a week,

Those fair-horned cattle closely following,

And in his hand he held a polished stick:

And, as on purpose, he walked wavering

From one side to the other of the road,

And with his face opposed the steps he trod.'

270

275

## XXXVI

Apollo hearing this, passed quickly on—

No wingèd omen could have shown more clear

That the deceiver was his father's son.

So the God wraps a purple atmosphere

Around his shoulders, and like fire is gone

To famous Pylos, seeking his kine there,

And found their track and his, yet hardly cold,

And cried—'What wonder do mine eyes behold!

280

285

## XXXVII

'Here are the footsteps of the hornèd herd

Turnèd back towards their fields of asphodel;—

But *these* are not the tracks of beast or bird,

Gray wolf, or bear, or lion of the dell,

Or manèd Centaur—sand was never stirred

By man or woman thus! Inexplicable!

Who with unwearied feet could e'er impress

The sand with such enormous vestiges?

290

'That was most strange—but this is stranger still!'  
 Thus having said, Phoebus impetuously 295  
 Sought high Cyllene's forest-cinctured hill.  
 And the deep cavern where dark shadows lie,  
 And where the ambrosial nymph with happy will  
 Bore the Saturnian's love-child, Mercury—  
 And a delightful odour from the dew 300  
 Of the hill pastures, at his coming, flew.

## XXXIX

And Phoebus stooped under the craggy roof  
 Arched over the dark cavern:—Maia's child  
 Perceived that he came angry, far aloof,  
 About the cows of which he had been beguiled; 305  
 And over him the fine and fragrant woof  
 Of his ambrosial swaddling-clothes he piled—  
 As among fire-brands lies a burning spark  
 Covered, beneath the ashes cold and dark.

## XL

There, like an infant who had sucked his fill 310  
 And now was newly washed and put to bed,  
 Awake, but courting sleep with weary will,  
 And gathered in a lump, hands, feet, and head,  
 He lay, and his belovèd tortoise still  
 He grasped and held under his shoulder-blade. 315  
 Phoebus the lovely mountain-goddess knew,  
 Not less her subtle, swindling baby, who

## XLI

Lay swathed in his sly wiles. Round every crook  
 Of the ample cavern, for his kine, Apollo  
 Looked sharp; and when he saw them not, he took 320  
 The glittering key, and opened three great hollow  
 Recesses in the rock—where many a nook  
 Was filled with the sweet food immortals swallow,  
 And mighty heaps of silver and of gold  
 Were piled within—a wonder to behold! 325

## XLII

And white and silver robes, all overwrought  
 With cunning workmanship of tracery sweet—  
 Except among the Gods there can be nought  
 In the wide world to be compared with it,

Latona's offspring, after having sought  
 His herds in every corner, thus did greet  
 Great Hermes:—'Little cradled rogue, declare  
 Of my illustrious heifers, where they are!

330

## XLIII

'Speak quickly! or a quarrel between us  
 Must rise, and the event will be, that I  
 Shall hurl you into dismal Tartarus,  
 In fiery gloom to dwell eternally;  
 Nor shall your father nor your mother loose  
 The bars of that black dungeon—utterly  
 You shall be cast out from the light of day,  
 To rule the ghosts of men, unblessed as they.'

335

340

## XLIV

To whom thus Hermes slily answered:—'Son  
 Of great Latona, what a speech is this!  
 Why come you here to ask me what is done  
 With the wild oxen which it seems you miss?  
 I have not seen them, nor from any one  
 Have heard a word of the whole business;  
 If you should promise an immense reward,  
 I could not tell more than you now have heard.

345

## XLV

'An ox-stealer should be both tall and strong,  
 And I am but a little new-born thing,  
 Who, yet at least, can think of nothing wrong:—  
 My business is to suck, and sleep, and fling  
 The cradle-clothes about me all day long,—  
 Or half asleep, hear my sweet mother sing,  
 And to be washed in water clean and warm,  
 And hushed and kissed and kept secure from harm.

350

355

## XLVI

'O, let not e'er this quarrel be averred!  
 The astounded Gods would laugh at you, if e'er  
 You should allege a story so absurd  
 As that a new-born infant forth could fare  
 Out of his home after a savage herd.  
 I was born yesterday—my small feet are  
 Too tender for the roads so hard and rough:—  
 And if you think that this is not enough,

360

365

## XLVII

'I swear a great oath, by my father's head,  
 That I stole not your cows, and that I know  
 Of no one else, who might, or could, or did.—  
 Whatever things cows are, I do not know,  
 For I have only heard the name.'—This said, 370  
 He winked as fast as could be, and his brow  
 Was wrinkled, and a whistle loud gave he,  
 Like one who hears some strange absurdity.

## XLVIII

Apollo gently smiled and said:—'Ay, ay,—  
 You cunning little rascal, you will bore 375  
 Many a rich man's house, and your array  
 Of thieves will lay their siege before his door,  
 Silent as night, in night; and many a day  
 In the wild glens rough shepherds will deplore  
 That you or yours, having an appetite, 380  
 Met with their cattle, comrade of the night!

## XLIX

'And this among the Gods shall be your gift,  
 To be considered as the lord of those  
 Who swindle, house-break, sheep-steal, and shop-lift;—  
 But now if you would not your last sleep doze; 385  
 Crawl out!'—Thus saying, Phoebus did uplift  
 The subtle infant in his swaddling clothes,  
 And in his arms, according to his wont,  
 A scheme devised, the illustrious Argiphont.

## L

. . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 And sneezed and shuddered—Phoebus on the grass 390  
 Him threw, and whilst all that he had designed  
 He did perform—eager although to pass,  
 Apollo darted from his mighty mind  
 Towards the subtle babe the following scoff:—  
 'Do not imagine this will get you off, 395

## LI

'You little swaddled child of Jove and May!'  
 And seized him:—'By this omen I shall trace  
 My noble herds, and you shall lead the way.'—  
 Cyllenian Hermes from the grassy place,



Like one in earnest haste to get away,  
 Rose, and with hands lifted towards his face  
 Round both his ears up from his shoulders drew  
 His swaddling clothes, and—'What mean you to do

400

## LII

'With me, you unkind God?'—said Mercury:  
 'Is it about these cows you tease me so?  
 I wish the race of cows were perished!—I  
 Stole not your cows—I do not even know  
 What things cows are. Alas! I well may sigh  
 That, since I came into this world of woe,  
 I should have ever heard the name of one—  
 But I appeal to the Saturnian's throne.'

405

410

## LIII

Thus Phoebus and the vagrant Mercury  
 Talked without coming to an explanation,  
 With adverse purpose. As for Phoebus, he  
 Sought not revenge, but only information,  
 And Hermes tried with lies and roguery  
 To cheat Apollo.—But when no evasion  
 Served—for the cunning one his match had found—  
 He paced on first over the sandy ground.

415

## LIV

He of the Silver Bow the child of Jove  
 Followed behind, till to their heavenly Sire  
 Came both his children, beautiful as Love,  
 And from his equal balance did require  
 A judgement in the cause wherein they strove.  
 O'er odorous Olympus and its snows  
 A murmuring tumult as they came arose,—

420

425

## LV

And from the folded depths of the great Hill,  
 While Hermes and Apollo reverent stood  
 Before Jove's throne, the indestructible  
 Immortals rushed in mighty multitude;  
 And whilst their seats in order due they fill,  
 The lofty Thunderer in a careless mood  
 To Phoebus said:—'Whence drive you this sweet prey,  
 This herald-baby, born but yesterday?—

430

## LVI

'A most important subject, trifle, this 435  
 To lay before the Gods!'—'Nay, Father, nay,  
 When you have understood the business,  
 Say not that I alone am fond of prey.  
 I found this little boy in a recess  
 Under Cyllene's mountains far away— 440  
 A manifest and most apparent thief,  
 A scandalmonger beyond all belief.

## LVII

'I never saw his like either in Heaven  
 Or upon earth for knavery or craft:—  
 Out of the field my cattle yester-even, 445  
 By the low shore on which the loud sea laughed,  
 He right down to the river-ford had driven;  
 And mere astonishment would make you daft  
 To see the double kind of footsteps strange  
 He has impressed wherever he did range. 450

## LVIII

'The cattle's track on the black dust, full well  
 Is evident, as if they went towards  
 The place from which they came—that asphodel  
 Meadow, in which I feed my many herds,—  
 His steps were most incomprehensible— 455  
 I know not how I can describe in words  
 Those tracks—he could have gone along the sands  
 Neither upon his feet nor on his hands;—

## LIX

'He must have had some other stranger mode  
 Of moving on: those vestiges immense, 460  
 Far as I traced them on the sandy road,  
 Seemed like the trail of oak-toppings:—but thence  
 No mark nor track denoting where they trod  
 The hard ground gave:—but, working at his fence,  
 A mortal hedger saw him as he passed 465  
 To Pylos, with the cows, in fiery haste.

## LX

'I found that in the dark he quietly  
 Had sacrificed some cows, and before light  
 Had thrown the ashes all dispersedly  
 About the road—then, still as gloomy night, 470

Had crept into his cradle, either eye  
 Rubbing, and cogitating some new sleight,  
 No eagle could have seen him as he lay  
 Hid in his cavern from the peering day.

## LXI

'I taxed him with the fact, when he averred 475  
 Most solemnly that he did neither see  
 Nor even had in any manner heard  
 Of my lost cows, whatever things cows be;  
 Nor could he tell, though offered a reward,  
 Not even who could tell of them to me.' 480  
 So speaking, Phoebus sate; and Hermes then  
 Addressed the Supreme Lord of Gods and Men:—

## LXII

'Great Father, you know clearly beforehand  
 That all which I shall say to you is sooth;  
 I am a most veracious person, and 485  
 Totally unacquainted with untruth.  
 At sunrise Phoebus came, but with no band  
 Of Gods to bear him witness, in great wrath,  
 To my abode, seeking his heifers there,  
 And saying that I must show him where they are, 490

## LXIII

'Or he would hurl me down the dark abyss.  
 I know that every Apollonian limb  
 Is clothed with speed and might and manliness,  
 As a green bank with flowers—but unlike him  
 I was born yesterday, and you may guess 495  
 He well knew this when he indulged the whim  
 Of bullying a poor little new-born thing  
 That slept, and never thought of cow-driving.

## LXIV

'Am I like a strong fellow who steals kine?  
 Believe me, dearest Father—such you are— 500  
 This driving of the herds is none of mine;  
 Across my threshold did I wander ne'er,  
 So may I thrive! I reverence the divine  
 Sun and the Gods, and I love you, and care  
 Even for this hard accuser—who must know 505  
 I am as innocent as they or you.

'I swear by these most gloriously-wrought portals  
 (It is, you will allow, an oath of might)  
 Through which the multitude of the Immortals  
 Pass and repass forever, day and night, 510  
 Devising schemes for the affairs of mortals—  
 That I am guiltless; and I will requite,  
 Although mine enemy be great and strong,  
 His cruel threat—do thou defend the young!'

So speaking, the Cyllenian Argiphont 515  
 Winked, as if now his adversary was fitted:—  
 And Jupiter, according to his wont,  
 Laughed heartily to hear the subtle-witted  
 Infant give such a plausible account,  
 And every word a lie. But he remitted 520  
 Judgement at present—and his exhortation  
 Was, to compose the affair by arbitration.

And they by mighty Jupiter were bidden  
 To go forth with a single purpose both,  
 Neither the other chiding nor yet chidden: 525  
 And Mercury with innocence and truth  
 To lead the way, and show where he had hidden  
 The mighty heifers.—Hermes, nothing loth,  
 Obeyed the Aegis-bearer's will—for he  
 Is able to persuade all easily. 530

These lovely children of Heaven's highest Lord  
 Hastened to Pylos and the pastures wide  
 And lofty stalls by the Alphean ford,  
 Where wealth in the mute night is multiplied  
 With silent growth. Whilst Hermes drove the herd 535  
 Out of the stony cavern, Phoebus spied  
 The hides of those the little babe had slain,  
 Stretched on the precipice above the plain.

'How was it possible,' then Phoebus said,  
 'That you, a little child, born yesterday,  
 A thing on mother's milk and kisses fed, 540  
 Could two prodigious heifers ever flay?'

Even I myself may well hereafter dread

Your prowess, offspring of Cyllenian May,  
When you grow strong and tall.'—He spoke, and bound  
Stiff withy bands the infant's wrists around,

545

## LXX

He might as well have bound the oxen wild;

The withy bands, though starkly interknit,  
Fell at the feet of the immortal child,

Loosened by some device of his quick wit.

550

Phoebus perceived himself again beguiled,

And stared—while Hermes sought some hole or pit,  
Looking askance and winking fast as thought,  
Where he might hide himself and not be caught.

## LXXI

Sudden he changed his plan, and with strange skill

555

Subdued the strong Latonian, by the might  
Of winning music, to his mightier will;

His left hand held the lyre, and in his right  
The plectrum struck the chords—unconquerable

560

Up from beneath his hand in circling flight

The gathering music rose—and sweet as Love  
The penetrating notes did live and move

## LXXII

Within the heart of great Apollo—he

Listened with all his soul, and laughed for pleasure.  
Close to his side stood harping fearlessly

565

The unabashed boy; and to the measure  
Of the sweet lyre, there followed loud and free

His joyous voice; for he unlocked the treasure  
Of his deep song, illustrating the birth

Of the bright Gods, and the dark desert Earth:

570

## LXXIII

And how to the Immortals every one

A portion was assigned of all that is;

But chief Mnemosyne did Maia's son

Clothe in the light of his loud melodies;—

And, as each God was born or had begun,

575

He in their order due and fit degrees

Sung of his birth and being—and did move

Apollo to unutterable love.

These words were wingèd with his swift delight:  
 'You heifer-stealing schemer, well do you  
 Deserve that fifty oxen should requite 580  
 Such minstrelsies as I have heard even now.  
 Comrade of feasts, little contriving wight,  
 One of your secrets I would gladly know,  
 Whether the glorious power you now show forth 585  
 Was folded up within you at your birth,

'Or whether mortal taught or God inspired  
 The power of unpremeditated song?  
 Many divinest sounds have I admired,  
 The Olympian Gods and mortal men among; 590  
 But such a strain of wondrous, strange, untired,  
 And soul-awakening music, sweet and strong,  
 Yet did I never hear except from thee,  
 Offspring of May, impostor Mercury!

'What Muse, what skill, what unimagined use, 595  
 What exercise of subtlest art, has given  
 Thy songs such power?—for those who hear may choose  
 From three, the choicest of the gifts of Heaven,  
 Delight, and love, and sleep,—sweet sleep, whose dews  
 Are sweeter than the balmy tears of even:— 600  
 And I, who speak this praise, am that Apollo  
 Whom the Olympian Muses ever follow:

'And their delight is dance, and the blithe noise  
 Of song and overflowing poesy;  
 And sweet, even as desire, the liquid voice 605  
 Of pipes, that fills the clear air thrillingly;  
 But never did my inmost soul rejoice  
 In this dear work of youthful revelry  
 As now. I wonder at thee, son of Jove;  
 Thy harpings and thy song are soft as love. 610

'Now since thou hast, although so very small,  
 Science of arts so glorious, thus I swear,—  
 And let this cornel javelin, keen and tall,  
 Witness between us what I promise here,—

That I will lead thee to the Olympian Hall,  
 Honoured and mighty, with thy mother dear,  
 And many glorious gifts in joy will give thee,  
 And even at the end will ne'er deceive thee.'

615

## LXXIX

To whom thus Mercury with prudent speech:—

'Wisely hast thou inquired of my skill:

620

I envy thee no thing I know to teach

Even this day:—for both in word and will

I would be gentle with thee; thou canst reach

All things in thy wise spirit, and thy sill

Is highest in Heaven among the sons of Jove,

625

Who loves thee in the fulness of his love.

## LXXX

'The Counsellor Supreme has given to thee

Divinest gifts, out of the amplitude

Of his profuse exhaustless treasury;

By thee, 'tis said, the depths are understood

630

Of his far voice; by thee the mystery

Of all oracular fates,—and the dread mood

Of the diviner is breathed up; even I—

A child—perceive thy might and majesty.

## LXXXI

'Thou canst seek out and compass all that wit

635

Can find or teach;—yet since thou wilt, come take

The lyre—be mine the glory giving it—

Strike the sweet chords, and sing aloud, and wake

Thy joyous pleasure out of many a fit

Of tranced sound—and with fleet fingers make

640

Thy liquid-voiced comrade talk with thee,—

It can talk measured music eloquently.

## LXXXII

'Then bear it boldly to the revel loud,

Love-wakening dance, or feast of solemn state,

A joy by night or day—for those endowed

645

With art and wisdom who interrogate

It teaches, babbling in delightful mood

All things which make the spirit most elate,

Soothing the mind with sweet familiar play,

Chasing the heavy shadows of dismay.

650

'To those who are unskilled in its sweet tongue,  
 Though they should question most impetuously  
 Its hidden soul, it gossips something wrong—  
 Some senseless and impertinent reply.  
 But thou who art as wise as thou art strong 655  
 Canst compass all that thou desirest. I  
 Present thee with this music-flowing shell,  
 Knowing thou canst interrogate it well.

'And let us two henceforth together feed,  
 On this green mountain-slope and pastoral plain, 660  
 The herds in litigation—they will breed  
 Quickly enough to recompense our pain,  
 If to the bulls and cows we take good heed;—  
 And thou, though somewhat over fond of gain, 665  
 Grudge me not half the profit.'—Having spoke,  
 The shell he proffered, and Apollo took;

And gave him in return the glittering lash,  
 Installing him as herdsman;—from the look  
 Of Mercury then laughed a joyous flash.  
 And then Apollo with the plectrum strook 670  
 The chords, and from beneath his hands a crash  
 Of mighty sounds rushed up, whose music shook  
 The soul with sweetness, and like an adept  
 His sweeter voice a just accordance kept.

The herd went wandering o'er the divine mead, 675  
 Whilst these most beautiful Sons of Jupiter  
 Won their swift way up to the snowy head  
 Of white Olympus, with the joyous lyre  
 Soothing their journey; and their father dread  
 Gathered them both into familiar 680  
 Affection sweet,—and then, and now, and ever,  
 Hermes must love Him of the Golden Quiver,

To whom he gave the lyre that sweetly sounded,  
 Which skilfully he held and played thereon.  
 He piped the while, and far and wide rebounded 685  
 The echo of his pipings; every one



Of the Olympians sat with joy astounded;  
 While he conceived another piece of fun,  
 One of his old tricks—which the God of Day  
 Perceiving, said:—‘I fear thee, Son of May;—

690

## LXXXVIII

‘I fear thee and thy sly chameleon spirit,  
 Lest thou should steal my lyre and crookèd bow;  
 This glory and power thou dost from Jove inherit,  
 To teach all craft upon the earth below;  
 Thieves love and worship thee—it is thy merit  
 To make all mortal business ebb and flow  
 By roguery:—now, Hermes, if you dare  
 By sacred Styx a mighty oath to swear

695

## LXXXIX

‘That you will never rob me, you will do  
 A thing extremely pleasing to my heart.’  
 Then Mercury swore by the Stygian dew,  
 That he would never steal his bow or dart,  
 Or lay his hands on what to him was due,  
 Or ever would employ his powerful art  
 Against his Pythian fane. Then Phoebus swore  
 There was no God or Man whom he loved more.

706

705

## XC

‘And I will give thee as a good-will token,  
 The beautiful wand of wealth and happiness;  
 A perfect three-leaved rod of gold unbroken,  
 Whose magic will thy footsteps ever bless;  
 And whatsoever by Jove’s voice is spoken  
 Of earthly or divine from its recess,  
 It, like a loving soul, to thee will speak,  
 And more than this, do thou forbear to seek.

710

## XCI

‘For, dearest child, the divinations high  
 Which thou requirest, ’tis unlawful ever  
 That thou, or any other deity  
 Should understand—and vain were the endeavour;  
 For they are hidden in Jove’s mind, and I,  
 In trust of them, have sworn that I would never  
 Betray the counsels of Jove’s inmost will  
 To any God—the oath was terrible.

715

720

## XCII

'Then, golden-wanded brother, ask me not  
 To speak the fates by Jupiter designed;  
 But be it mine to tell their various lot 725  
 To the unnumbered tribes of human-kind.  
 Let good to these, and ill to those be wrought  
 As I dispense—but he who comes consigned  
 By voice and wings of perfect augury  
 To my great shrine, shall find avail in me. 730

## XCIII

'Him will I not deceive, but will assist;  
 But he who comes relying on such birds  
 As chatter vainly, who would strain and twist  
 The purpose of the Gods with idle words,  
 And deems their knowledge light, he shall have missed 735  
 His road—whilst I among my other hoards  
 His gifts deposit. Yet, O son of May,  
 I have another wondrous thing to say.

## XCIV

'There are three Fates, three virgin Sisters, who  
 Rejoicing in their wind-outspeeding wings, 740  
 Their heads with flour snowed over white and new,  
 Sit in a vale round which Parnassus flings  
 Its circling skirts—from these I have learned true  
 Vaticinations of remotest things.  
 My father cared not. Whilst they search out dooms, 745  
 They sit apart and feed on honeycombs.

## XCV

'They, having eaten the fresh honey, grow  
 Drunk with divine enthusiasm, and utter  
 With earnest willingness the truth they know;  
 But if deprived of that sweet food, they mutter 750  
 All plausible delusions;—these to you  
 I give;—if you inquire, they will not stutter;  
 Delight your own soul with them:—any man  
 You would instruct may profit if he can.

## XCVI

'Take these and the fierce oxen, Maia's child— 755  
 O'er many a horse and toil-enduring mule,  
 O'er jagged-jawed lions, and the wild  
 White-tusked boars, o'er all, by field or pool,

Of cattle which the mighty Mother mild  
 Nourishes in her bosom, thou shalt rule—  
 Thou dost alone the veil from death uplift—  
 Thou givest not—yet this is a great gift.'

760

## XCVII

Thus King Apollo loved the child of May  
 In truth, and Jove covered their love with joy.  
 Hermes with Gods and Men even from that day  
 Mingled, and wrought the latter much annoy,  
 And little profit, going far astray  
 Through the dun night. Farewell, delightful Boy,  
 Of Jove and Maia sprung,—never by me,  
 Nor thou, nor other songs, shall unremembered be.

765

770

## HOMER'S HYMN TO CASTOR AND POLLUX

YE wild-eyed Muses, sing the Twins of Jove,  
 Whom the fair-ankled Leda, mixed in love  
 With mighty Saturn's Heaven-obscuring Child,  
 On Taygetus, that lofty mountain wild,  
 Brought forth in joy: mild Pollux, void of blame,  
 And steed-subduing Castor, heirs of fame.  
 These are the Powers who earth-born mortals save  
 And ships, whose flight is swift along the wave.  
 When wintry tempests o'er the savage sea  
 Are raging, and the sailors tremblingly  
 Call on the Twins of Jove with prayer and vow,  
 Gathered in fear upon the lofty prow,  
 And sacrifice with snow-white lambs,—the wind  
 And the huge billow bursting close behind,  
 Even then beneath the weltering waters bear  
 The staggering ship—they suddenly appear,  
 On yellow wings rushing athwart the sky,  
 And lull the blasts in mute tranquillity,  
 And strew the waves on the white Ocean's bed,  
 Fair omen of the voyage; from toil and dread  
 The sailors rest, rejoicing in the sight,  
 And plough the quiet sea in safe delight.

5

10

15

20

## HOMER'S HYMN TO THE MOON

DAUGHTERS of Jove, whose voice is melody,  
 Muses, who know and rule all minstrelsy,  
 Sing the wide-wingèd Moon! Around the earth,  
 From her immortal head in Heaven shot forth,  
 Far light is scattered—boundless glory springs;  
 Where'er she spreads her many-beaming wings  
 The lampless air glows round her golden crown.

5

But when the Moon divine from Heaven is gone  
 Under the sea, her beams within abide,  
 Till, bathing her bright limbs in Ocean's tide, 10  
 Clothing her form in garments glittering far,  
 And having yoked to her immortal car  
 The beam-invested steeds whose necks on high  
 Curve back, she drives to a remoter sky  
 A western Crescent, borne impetuously. 15  
 Then is made full the circle of her light,  
 And as she grows, her beams more bright and bright  
 Are poured from Heaven, where she is hovering then,  
 A wonder and a sign to mortal men.

The Son of Saturn with this glorious Power 20  
 Mingled in love and sleep—to whom she bore  
 Pandeia, a bright maid of beauty rare  
 Among the Gods, whose lives eternal are.

Hail Queen, great Moon, white-armed Divinity,  
 Fair-haired and favourable! thus with thee 25  
 My song beginning, by its music sweet  
 Shall make immortal many a glorious feat  
 Of demigods, with lovely lips, so well  
 Which minstrels, servants of the Muses, tell.

### HOMER'S HYMN TO THE SUN

OFFSPRING of Jove, Calliope, once more  
 To the bright Sun, thy hymn of music pour;  
 Whom to the child of star-clad Heaven and Earth  
 Euryphaëssa, large-eyed nymph, brought forth;  
 Euryphaëssa, the famed sister fair 5  
 Of great Hyperion, who to him did bear  
 A race of loveliest children; the young Morn,  
 Whose arms are like twin roses newly born,  
 The fair-haired Moon, and the immortal Sun,  
 Who borne by heavenly steeds his race doth run 10  
 Unconquerably, illuming the abodes  
 Of mortal Men and the eternal Gods.

Fiercely look forth his awe-inspiring eyes,  
 Beneath his golden helmet, whence arise  
 And are shot forth afar, clear beams of light; 15  
 His countenance, with radiant glory bright,  
 Beneath his graceful locks far shines around,  
 And the light vest with which his limbs are bound,  
 Of woof aethereal delicately twined,  
 Glows in the stream of the uplifting wind. 20

His rapid steeds soon bear him to the West;  
 Where their steep flight his hands divine arrest,  
 And the fleet car with yoke of gold, which he  
 Sends from bright Heaven beneath the shadowy sea.

# HOMER'S HYMN TO THE EARTH: MOTHER OF ALL

O UNIVERSAL Mother, who dost keep  
 From everlasting thy foundations deep,  
 Eldest of things, Great Earth, I sing of thee!  
 All shapes that have their dwelling in the sea,  
 All things that fly, or on the ground divine 5  
 Live, move, and there are nourished—these are thine;  
 These from thy wealth thou dost sustain; from thee  
 Fair babes are born, and fruits on every tree  
 Hang ripe and large, revered Divinity!

The life of mortal men beneath thy sway 10  
 Is held; thy power both gives and takes away!  
 Happy are they whom thy mild favours nourish;  
 All things unstinted round them grow and flourish.  
 For them, endures the life-sustaining field  
 Its load of harvest, and their cattle yield 15  
 Large increase, and their house with wealth is filled.  
 Such honoured dwell in cities fair and free,  
 The homes of lovely women, prosperously;  
 Their sons exult in youth's new budding gladness,  
 And their fresh daughters free from care or sadness, 20  
 With bloom-inwoven dance and happy song,  
 On the soft flowers the meadow-grass among,  
 Leap round them sporting—such delights by thee  
 Are given, rich Power, revered Divinity.

Mother of gods, thou Wife of starry Heaven, 25  
 Farewell! be thou propitious, and be given  
 A happy life for this brief melody,  
 Nor thou nor other songs shall unremembered be.

# HOMER'S HYMN TO MINERVA

I SING the glorious Power with azure eyes,  
 Athenian Pallas! tameless, chaste, and wise,  
 Tritogenia, town-preserving Maid,  
 Revered and mighty; from his awful head  
 Whom Jove brought forth, in warlike armour dressed, 5  
 Golden, all radiant! wonder strange possessed  
 The everlasting Gods that Shape to see,  
 Shaking a javelin keen, impetuously

Rush from the crest of Aegis-bearing Jove;  
 Fearfully Heaven was shaken, and did move 10  
 Beneath the might of the Cerulean-eyed;  
 Earth dreadfully resounded, far and wide;  
 And, lifted from its depths, the sea swelled high  
 In purple billows, the tide suddenly  
 Stood still, and great Hyperion's son long time 15  
 Checked his swift steeds, till where she stood sublime,  
 Pallas from her immortal shoulders threw  
 The arms divine; wise Jove rejoiced to view.  
 Child of the Aegis-bearer, hail to thee,  
 Nor thine nor others' praise shall unremembered be. 20

## HOMER'S HYMN TO VENUS

[Vv. 1-55, with some omissions.]

MUSE, sing the deeds of golden Aphrodite,  
 Who wakens with her smile the lulled delight  
 Of sweet desire, taming the eternal kings  
 Of Heaven, and men, and all the living things 5  
 That fleet along the air, or whom the sea,  
 Or earth, with her maternal ministry,  
 Nourish innumerable, thy delight  
 All seek O crownèd Aphrodite!  
 Three spirits canst thou not deceive or quell:—  
 Minerva, child of Jove, who loves too well 10  
 Fierce war and mingling combat, and the fame  
 Of glorious deeds, to heed thy gentle flame.  
 Diana golden-shafted queen,  
 Is tamed not by thy smiles; the shadows green  
 Of the wild woods, the bow, the . . . 15  
 And piercing cries amid the swift pursuit  
 Of beasts among waste mountains,—such delight  
 Is hers, and men who know and do the right.  
 Nor Saturn's first-born daughter, Vesta chaste,  
 Whom Neptune and Apollo wooed the last, 20  
 Such was the will of aegis-bearing Jove;  
 But sternly she refused the ills of Love,  
 And by her mighty Father's head she swore  
 An oath not unperformed, that evermore  
 A virgin she would live mid deities 25  
 Divine: her father, for such gentle ties  
 Renounced, gave glorious gifts—thus in his hall  
 She sits and feeds luxuriously. O'er all  
 In every fane, her honours first arise  
 From men—the eldest of Divinities. 30

These spirits she persuades not, nor deceives,  
But none beside escape, so well she weaves  
Her unseen toils; nor mortal men, nor gods  
Who live secure in their unseen abodes.  
She won the soul of him whose fierce delight  
Is thunder—first in glory and in might.  
And, as she willed, his mighty mind deceiving,  
With mortal limbs his deathless limbs inweaving,  
Concealed him from his spouse and sister fair,  
Whom to wise Saturn ancient Rhea bare.

35

but in return,

In Venus Jove did soft desire awaken,  
That by her own enchantments overtaken,  
She might, no more from human union free,  
Burn for a nursling of mortality.

40

For once, amid the assembled Deities,  
The laughter-loving Venus from her eyes  
Shot forth the light of a soft starlight smile,  
And boasting said, that she, secure the while,  
Could bring at will to the assembled Gods  
The mortal tenants of earth's dark abodes,  
And mortal offspring from a deathless stem  
She could produce in scorn and spite of them.

45

Therefore he poured desire into her breast  
Of young Anchises,  
Feeding his herds among the mossy fountains  
Of the wide Ida's many-folded mountains,—  
Whom Venus saw, and loved, and the love clung  
Like wasting fire her senses wild among.

50

55

## THE CYCLOPS

A SATYRIC DRAMA

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF EURIPIDES

SILENUS.

CHORUS OF SATYRS.

ULYSSES.

## THE CYCLOPS.

*Silenus.* O Bacchus, what a world of toil, both now  
And ere these limbs were overworn with age,  
Have I endured for thee! First, when thou fled'st  
The mountain-nymphs who nursed thee, driven afar  
By the strange madness Juno sent upon thee; 5  
Then in the battle of the sons of Earth,  
When I stood foot by foot close to thy side,  
No unpropitious fellow-combatant,  
And, driving through his shield my wingèd spear,  
Slew vast Enceladus. Consider now, 10

Is it a dream of which I speak to thee?  
 By Jove, it is not, for you have the trophies!  
 And now I suffer more than all before.  
 For when I heard that Juno had devised  
 A tedious voyage for you, I put to sea 15  
 With all my children quaint in search of you,  
 And I myself stood on the beakèd prow  
 And fixed the naked mast; and all my boys  
 Leaning upon their oars, with splash and strain  
 Made white with foam the green and purple sea,— 20  
 And so we sought you, king. We were sailing  
 Near Malea, when an eastern wind arose,  
 And drove us to this waste Aetnean rock;  
 The one-eyed children of the Ocean God,  
 The man-destroying Cyclopes, inhabit, 25  
 On this wild shore, their solitary caves,  
 And one of these, named Polypheme, has caught us  
 To be his slaves; and so, for all delight  
 Of Bacchic sports, sweet dance and melody,  
 We keep this lawless giant's wandering flocks. 30  
 My sons indeed, on far declivities,  
 Young things themselves, tend on the youngling sheep,  
 But I remain to fill the water-casks,  
 Or sweeping the hard floor, or ministering  
 Some impious and abominable meal 35  
 To the fell Cyclops. I am wearied of it!  
 And now I must scrape up the littered floor  
 With this great iron rake, so to receive  
 My absent master and his evening sheep  
 In a cave neat and clean. Even now I see 40  
 My children tending the flocks hitherward.  
 Ha! what is this? are your Sicinnian measures  
 Even now the same, as when with dance and song  
 You brought young Bacchus to Althaea's halls?

*Chorus of Satyrs.*

STROPHE

Where has he of race divine 45  
 Wandered in the winding rocks?  
 Here the air is calm and fine  
 For the father of the flocks;—  
 Here the grass is soft and sweet,  
 And the river-eddies meet 50  
 In the trough beside the cave,  
 Bright as in their fountain wave.—  
 Neither here, nor on the dew



Of the lawny uplands feeding?  
 Oh, you come!—a stone at you 55  
 Will I throw to mend your breeding;—  
 Get along, you hornèd thing,  
 Wild, seditious, rambling!

## EPODE

An Iacchic melody  
 To the golden Aphrodite 60  
 Will I lift, as erst did I  
 Seeking her and her delight  
 With the Maenads, whose white feet  
 To the music glance and fleet.  
 Bacchus, O beloved, where, 65  
 Shaking wide thy yellow hair,  
 Wanderest thou alone, afar?  
 To the one-eyed Cyclops, we,  
 Who by right thy servants are,  
 Minister in misery, 70  
 In these wretched goat-skins clad,  
 Far from thy delights and thee.

*Silenus.* Be silent, sons; command the slaves to drive  
 The gathered flocks into the rock-roofed cave.

*Chorus.* Go! But what needs this serious haste, O father?

*Silenus.* I see a Grecian vessel on the coast, 76  
 And thence the rowers with some general  
 Approaching to this cave.—About their necks  
 Hang empty vessels, as they wanted food,  
 And water-flasks.—Oh, miserable strangers! 80  
 Whence come they, that they know not what and who  
 My master is, approaching in ill hour  
 The inhospitable roof of Polypheme,  
 And the Cyclopiàn jaw-bone, man-destroying?  
 Be silent, Satyrs, while I ask and hear 85  
 Whence coming, they arrive the Aetnean hill.

*Ulysses.* Friends, can you show me some clear water-spring,  
 The remedy of our thirst? Will any one  
 Furnish with food seamen in want of it?  
 Ha! what is this? We seem to be arrived 90  
 At the blithe court of Bacchus. I observe  
 This sportive band of Satyrs near the caves.  
 First let me greet the elder.—Hail!

*Silenus.* Hail thou,  
 O Stranger! tell thy country and thy race.

*Ulysses.* The Ithacan Ulysses and the king 95  
 Of Cephalonia.

- Silenus.* Oh! I know the man,  
Wordy and shrewd, the son of Sisyphus.
- Ulysses.* I am the same, but do not rail upon me.—
- Silenus.* Whence sailing do you come to Sicily?
- Ulysses.* From Ilion, and from the Trojan toils. 10C
- Silenus.* How, touched you not at your paternal shore?
- Ulysses.* The strength of tempests bore me here by force.
- Silenus.* The self-same accident occurred to me.
- Ulysses.* Were you then driven here by stress of weather?
- Silenus.* Following the Pirates who had kidnapped Bacchus.
- Ulysses.* What land is this, and who inhabit it?— 106
- Silenus.* Aetna, the loftiest peak in Sicily.
- Ulysses.* And are there walls, and tower-surrounded towns?
- Silenus.* There are not.—These lone rocks are bare of men.
- Ulysses.* And who possess the land? the race of beasts?
- Silenus.* Cyclops, who live in caverns, not in houses. 111
- Ulysses.* Obeying whom? Or is the state popular?
- Silenus.* Shepherds: no one obeys any in aught.
- Ulysses.* How live they? do they sow the corn of Ceres?
- Silenus.* On milk and cheese, and on the flesh of sheep. 115
- Ulysses.* Have they the Bromian drink from the vine's stream?
- Silenus.* Ah! no; they live in an ungracious land.
- Ulysses.* And are they just to strangers?—hospitable?
- Silenus.* They think the sweetest thing a stranger brings  
Is his own flesh.
- Ulysses.* What! do they eat man's flesh? 120
- Silenus.* No one comes here who is not eaten up.
- Ulysses.* The Cyclops now—where is he? Not at home?
- Silenus.* Absent on Aetna, hunting with his dogs.
- Ulysses.* Know'st thou what thou must do to aid us hence?
- Silenus.* I know not: we will help you all we can. 125
- Ulysses.* Provide us food, of which we are in want.
- Silenus.* Here is not anything, as I said, but meat.
- Ulysses.* But meat is a sweet remedy for hunger.
- Silenus.* Cow's milk there is, and store of curdled cheese.
- Ulysses.* Bring out:—I would see all before I bargain. 130
- Silenus.* But how much gold will you engage to give?
- Ulysses.* I bring no gold, but Bacchic juice.
- Silenus.* Oh, joy!
- 'Tis long since these dry lips were wet with wine.
- Ulysses.* Maron, the son of the God, gave it me.
- Silenus.* Whom I have nursed a baby in my arms. 135
- Ulysses.* The son of Bacchus, for your clearer knowledge.
- Silenus.* Have you it now?—or is it in the ship?
- Ulysses.* Old man, this skin contains it, which you see.
- Silenus.* Why, this would hardly be a mouthful for me.
- Ulysses.* Nay, twice as much as you can draw from thence. 140

*Silenus.* You speak of a fair fountain, sweet to me.

*Ulysses.* Would you first taste of the unmingled wine?

*Silenus.* 'Tis just—tasting invites the purchaser.

*Ulysses.* Here is the cup, together with the skin.

*Silenus.* Pour: that the draught may fillip my remembrance.

*Ulysses.* See!

*Silenus.* Papaiapax! what a sweet smell it has! 146

*Ulysses.* You see it then?—

*Silenus.* By Jove, no! but I smell it.

*Ulysses.* Taste, that you may not praise it in words only.

*Silenus.* Babai! Great Bacchus calls me forth to dance!

Joy! joy!

*Ulysses.* Did it flow sweetly down your throat? 150

*Silenus.* So that it tingled to my very nails.

*Ulysses.* And in addition I will give you gold.

*Silenus.* Let gold alone! only unlock the cask.

*Ulysses.* Bring out some cheeses now, or a young goat.

*Silenus.* That will I do, despising any master. 155

Yes, let me drink one cup, and I will give

All that the Cyclops feed upon their mountains.

*Chorus.* Ye have taken Troy and laid your hands on Helen?

*Ulysses.* And utterly destroyed the race of Priam.

*Silenus.* The wanton wretch! she was bewitched to see 160  
The many-coloured anklets and the chain

Of woven gold which girt the neck of Paris,

And so she left that good man Menelaus.

There should be no more women in the world

But such as are reserved for me alone.— 165

See, here are sheep, and here are goats, Ulysses,

Here are unsparing cheeses of pressed milk;

Take them; depart with what good speed ye may;

First leaving my reward, the Bacchic dew

Of joy-inspiring grapes.

*Ulysses.* Ah me! Alas! 170

What shall we do? the Cyclops is at hand!

Old man, we perish! whither can we fly?

*Silenus.* Hide yourselves quick within that hollow rock.

*Ulysses.* 'Twere perilous to fly into the net.

*Silenus.* The cavern has recesses numberless; 175

Hide yourselves quick.

*Ulysses.* That will I never do!

The mighty Troy would be indeed disgraced

If I should fly one man. How many times

Have I withstood, with shield immovable,

Ten thousand Phrygians!—if I needs must die, 180  
 Yet will I die with glory;—if I live,  
 The praise which I have gained will yet remain.  
*Silenus.* What, ho! assistance, comrades, haste, assistance!

*The CYCLOPS, SILENUS, ULYSSES; CHORUS.*

*Cyclops.* What is this tumult? Bacchus is not here,  
 Nor tympanies nor brazen castanets. 185

How are my young lambs in the cavern? Milking  
 Their dams or playing by their sides? And is  
 The new cheese pressed into the bulrush baskets?  
 Speak! I'll beat some of you till you rain tears—  
 Look up, not downwards when I speak to you. 190

*Silenus.* See! I now gape at Jupiter himself;  
 I stare upon Orion and the stars.

*Cyclops.* Well, is the dinner fitly cooked and laid?

*Silenus.* All ready, if your throat is ready too.

*Cyclops.* Are the bowls full of milk besides?

*Silenus.* O'er-brimming;  
 So you may drink a tunful if you will. 196

*Cyclops.* Is it ewe's milk or cow's milk, or both mixed?—

*Silenus.* Both, either; only pray don't swallow me.

*Cyclops.* By no means.—

What is this crowd I see beside the stalls? 200  
 Outlaws or thieves? for near my cavern-home  
 I see my young lambs coupled two by two  
 With willow bands; mixed with my cheeses lie  
 Their implements; and this old fellow here  
 Has his bald head broken with stripes.

*Silenus.* Ah me! 205  
 I have been beaten till I burn with fever.

*Cyclops.* By whom? Who laid his fist upon your head?

*Silenus.* Those men, because I would not suffer them  
 To steal your goods.

*Cyclops.* Did not the rascals know  
 I am a God, sprung from the race of Heaven? 210

*Silenus.* I told them so, but they bore off your things,  
 And ate the cheese in spite of all I said,  
 And carried out the lambs—and said, moreover,  
 They'd pin you down with a three-cubit collar,  
 And pull your vitals out through your one eye, 215  
 Furrow your back with stripes, then, binding you,  
 Throw you as ballast into the ship's hold,  
 And then deliver you, a slave, to move  
 Enormous rocks, or found a vestibule.

*Cyclops.* In truth? Nay, haste, and place in order quickly

- The cooking-knives, and heap upon the hearth,  
 And kindle it, a great faggot of wood.—  
 As soon as they are slaughtered, they shall fill  
 My belly, broiling warm from the live coals,  
 Or boiled and seethed within the bubbling caldron. 225  
 I am quite sick of the wild mountain game;  
 Of stags and lions I have gorged enough,  
 And I grow hungry for the flesh of men.
- Silenus.* Nay, master, something new is very pleasant  
 After one thing forever, and of late 230  
 Very few strangers have approached our cave.
- Ulysses.* Hear, Cyclops, a plain tale on the other side.  
 We, wanting to buy food, came from our ship  
 Into the neighbourhood of your cave, and here  
 This old Silenus gave us in exchange 235  
 These lambs for wine, the which he took and drank,  
 And all by mutual compact, without force.  
 There is no word of truth in what he says,  
 For slyly he was selling all your store.
- Silenus.* I? May you perish, wretch—  
*Ulysses.* If I speak false!
- Silenus.* Cyclops, I swear by Neptune who begot thee, 241  
 By mighty Triton and by Nereus old,  
 Calypso and the glaucous Ocean Nymphs,  
 The sacred waves and all the race of fishes—  
 Be these the witnesses, my dear sweet master, 245  
 My darling little Cyclops, that I never  
 Gave any of your stores to these false strangers;—  
 If I speak false may those whom most I love,  
 My children, perish wretchedly!
- Chorus.* There stop!  
 I saw him giving these things to the strangers. 250  
 If I speak false, then may my father perish,  
 But do not thou wrong hospitality.
- Cyclops.* You lie! I swear that he is juster far  
 Than Rhadamanthus—I trust more in him.  
 But let me ask, whence have ye sailed, O strangers? 255  
 Who are you? And what city nourished ye?
- Ulysses.* Our race is Ithacan—having destroyed  
 The town of Troy, the tempests of the sea  
 Have driven us on thy land, O Polypheme.
- Cyclops.* What, have ye shared in the unenvied spoil 260  
 Of the false Helen, near Scamander's stream?
- Ulysses.* The same, having endured a woful toil.
- Cyclops.* Oh, basest expedition! sailed ye not  
 From Greece to Phrygia for one woman's sake?
- Ulysses.* 'Twas the Gods' work—no mortal was in fault. 263

But, O great Offspring of the Ocean-King,  
 We pray thee and admonish thee with freedom,  
 That thou dost spare thy friends who visit thee,  
 And place no impious food within thy jaws.  
 For in the depths of Greece we have upreared 270  
 Temples to thy great Father, which are all  
 His homes. The sacred bay of Taenarus  
 Remains inviolate, and each dim recess  
 Scooped high on the Malean promontory,  
 And æry Sunium's silver veinèd crag, 275  
 Which divine Pallas keeps unprofaned ever,  
 The Gerastian asylums, and whate'er  
 Within wide Greece our enterprise has kept  
 From Phrygian contumely; and in which  
 You have a common care, for you inhabit 280  
 The skirts of Grecian land, under the roots  
 Of Aetna and its crags, spotted with fire.  
 Turn then to converse under human laws,  
 Receive us shipwrecked suppliants, and provide  
 Food, clothes, and fire, and hospitable gifts; 285  
 Nor fixing upon oxen-piercing spits  
 Our limbs, so fill your belly and your jaws.  
 Priam's wide land has widowed Greece enough;  
 And weapon-wingèd murder heaped together  
 Enough of dead, and wives are husbandless, 290  
 And ancient women and gray fathers wail  
 Their childless age;—if you should roast the rest—  
 And 'tis a bitter feast that you prepare—  
 Where then would any turn? Yet be persuaded;  
 Forgo the lust of your jaw-bone; prefer 295  
 Pious humanity to wicked will:  
 Many have bought too dear their evil joys.  
*Silenus.* Let me advise you, do not spare a morsel  
 Of all his flesh. If you should eat his tongue  
 You would become most eloquent, O Cyclops. 300  
*Cyclops.* Wealth, my good fellow, is the wise man's God,  
 All other things are a pretence and boast.  
 What are my father's ocean promontories,  
 The sacred rocks whereon he dwells, to me?  
 Stranger, I laugh to scorn Jove's thunderbolt, 305  
 I know not that his strength is more than mine.  
 As to the rest I care not.—When he pours  
 Rain from above, I have a close pavilion  
 Under this rock, in which I lie supine,  
 Feasting on a roast calf or some wild beast, 310  
 And drinking pans of milk, and gloriously  
 Emulating the thunder of high Heaven.

And when the Thracian wind pours down the snow,  
 I wrap my body in the skins of beasts,  
 Kindle a fire, and bid the snow swirl on. 315  
 The earth, by force, whether it will or no,  
 Bringing forth grass, fattens my flocks and herds,  
 Which, to what other God but to myself  
 And this great belly, first of deities,  
 Should I be bound to sacrifice? I well know 320  
 The wise man's only Jupiter is this,  
 To eat and drink during his little day,  
 And give himself no care. And as for those  
 Who complicate with laws the life of man,  
 I freely give them tears for their reward. 325  
 I will not cheat my soul of its delight,  
 Or hesitate in dining upon you:—  
 And that I may be quit of all demands,  
 These are my hospitable gifts;—fierce fire  
 And yon ancestral caldron, which o'er-bubbling 330  
 Shall finely cook your miserable flesh.  
 Creep in!—  
 . . . . .

*Ulysses.* Ai! ai! I have escaped the Trojan toils,  
 I have escaped the sea, and now I fall  
 Under the cruel grasp of one impious man. 335  
 O Pallas, Mistress, Goddess, sprung from Jove,  
 Now, now, assist me! Mightier toils than Troy  
 Are these;—I totter on the chasms of peril;—  
 And thou who inhabitest the thrones  
 Of the bright stars, look, hospitable Jove, 340  
 Upon this outrage of thy deity,  
 Otherwise be considered as no God!

*Chorus (alone).*

For your gaping gulf and your gullet wide,  
 The ravin is ready on every side,  
 The limbs of the strangers are cooked and done; 345  
 There is boiled meat, and roast meat, and meat from the coal,  
 You may chop it, and tear it, and gnash it for fun,  
 An hairy goat's-skin contains the whole.  
 Let me but escape, and ferry me o'er  
 The stream of your wrath to a safer shore. 350  
 The Cyclops Aetnean is cruel and bold,  
 He murders the strangers  
 That sit on his hearth,  
 And dreads no avengers  
 To rise from the earth. 355  
 He roasts the men before they are cold,

He snatches them broiling from the coal,  
 And from the caldron pulls them whole,  
 And minces their flesh and gnaws their bone  
 With his cursèd teeth, till all be gone. 360

Farewell, foul pavilion:

Farewell, rites of dread!

The Cyclops vermilion,

With slaughter uncloying,

Now feasts on the dead, 365

In the flesh of strangers joying!

*Ulysses.* O Jupiter! I saw within the cave  
 Horrible things; deeds to be feigned in words,  
 But not to be believed as being done.

*Chorus.* What! sawest thou the impious Polypheme 370  
 Feasting upon your loved companions now?

*Ulysses.* Selecting two, the plumpest of the crowd,  
 He grasped them in his hands.—

*Chorus.* Unhappy man!

. . . . .

*Ulysses.* Soon as we came into this craggy place,  
 Kindling a fire, he cast on the broad hearth 375

The knotty limbs of an enormous oak,  
 Three waggon-loads at least, and then he strewed

Upon the ground, beside the red firelight,  
 His couch of pine-leaves; and he milked the cows,  
 And pouring forth the white milk, filled a bowl 380

Three cubits wide and four in depth, as much  
 As would contain ten amphorae, and bound it

With ivy wreaths; then placed upon the fire  
 A brazen pot to boil, and made red hot

The points of spits, not sharpened with the sickle, 385  
 But with a fruit tree bough, and with the jaws

Of axes for Aetnean slaughters.<sup>1</sup>

And when this God-abandoned Cook of Hell  
 Had made all ready, he seized two of us

And killed them in a kind of measured manner; 390  
 For he flung one against the brazen rivets

Of the huge caldron, and seized the other  
 By the foot's tendon, and knocked out his brains

Upon the sharp edge of the craggy stone:  
 Then peeled his flesh with a great cooking-knife 395

And put him down to roast. The other's limbs  
 He chopped into the caldron to be boiled.

And I, with the tears raining from my eyes  
 Stood near the Cyclops, ministering to him;

<sup>1</sup> I confess I do not understand this.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]



The rest, in the recesses of the cave,  
 Clung to the rock like bats, bloodless with fear.  
 When he was filled with my companions' flesh,  
 He threw himself upon the ground and sent  
 A loathsome exhalation from his maw.  
 Then a divine thought came to me. I filled  
 The cup of Maron, and I offered him  
 To taste, and said:—'Child of the Ocean God,  
 Behold what drink the vines of Greece produce,  
 The exultation and the joy of Bacchus.'  
 He, satiated with his unnatural food,  
 Received it, and at one draught drank it off,  
 And taking my hand, praised me:—'Thou hast given  
 A sweet draught after a sweet meal, dear guest.'  
 And I, perceiving that it pleased him, filled  
 Another cup, well knowing that the wine  
 Would wound him soon and take a sure revenge.  
 And the charm fascinated him, and I  
 Plied him cup after cup, until the drink  
 Had warmed his entrails, and he sang aloud  
 In concert with my wailing fellow-seamen  
 A hideous discord—and the cavern rung.  
 I have stolen out, so that if you will  
 You may achieve my safety and your own.  
 But say, do you desire, or not, to fly  
 This uncompanionable man, and dwell  
 As was your wont among the Grecian Nymphs  
 Within the fanes of your beloved God?  
 Your father there within agrees to it,  
 But he is weak and overcome with wine,  
 And caught as if with bird-lime by the cup,  
 He claps his wings and crows in doting joy.  
 You who are young escape with me, and find  
 Bacchus your ancient friend; unsuited he  
 To this rude Cyclops.  
*Chorus.* Oh my dearest friend,  
 That I could see that day, and leave for ever  
 The impious Cyclops.

400

405

410

415

420

425

430

435

*Ulysses.* Listen then what a punishment I have  
 For this fell monster, how secure a flight  
 From your hard servitude.

*Chorus.* O sweeter far  
 Than is the music of an Asian lyre  
 Would be the news of Polypheme destroyed.

440

*Ulysses.* Delighted with the Bacchic drink he goes  
 To call his brother Cyclops—who inhabit

A village upon Aetna not far off.

*Chorus.* I understand, catching him when alone 445  
You think by some measure to dispatch him,  
Or thrust him from the precipice.

*Ulysses.* Oh no;  
Nothing of that kind; my device is subtle.

*Chorus.* How then? I heard of old that thou wert wise.

*Ulysses.* I will dissuade him from this plan, by saying 450

It were unwise to give the Cyclopes

This precious drink, which if enjoyed alone

Would make life sweeter for a longer time.

When, vanquished by the Bacchic power, he sleeps,

There is a trunk of olive wood within, 455

Whose point having made sharp with this good sword

I will conceal in fire, and when I see

It is alight, will fix it, burning yet,

Within the socket of the Cyclops' eye

And melt it out with fire—as when a man 460

Turns by its handle a great auger round,

Fitting the framework of a ship with beams,

So will I, in the Cyclops' fiery eye

Turn round the brand and dry the pupil up.

*Chorus.* Joy! I am mad with joy at your device. 465

*Ulysses.* And then with you, my friends, and the old man,

We'll load the hollow depth of our black ship,

And row with double strokes from this dread shore.

*Chorus.* May I, as in libations to a God, 470

Share in the blinding him with the red brand?

I would have some communion in his death.

*Ulysses.* Doubtless: the brand is a great brand to hold.

*Chorus.* Oh! I would lift an hundred waggon-loads,

If like a wasp's nest I could scoop the eye out

Of the detested Cyclops.

*Ulysses.* Silence now! 475

Ye know the close device—and when I call,

Look ye obey the masters of the craft.

I will not save myself and leave behind

My comrades in the cave: I might escape,

Having got clear from that obscure recess, 480

But 'twere unjust to leave in jeopardy

The dear companions who sailed here with me.

*Chorus.*

Come! who is first, that with his hand

Will urge down the burning brand

Through the lids, and quench and pierce 485

The Cyclops' eye so fiery fierce?

*Semichorus I. (Song within.)*

Listen! listen! he is coming,  
 A most hideous discord humming.  
 Drunken, museless, awkward, yelling,  
 Far along his rocky dwelling; 490  
 Let us with some comic spell  
 Teach the yet unteachable.  
 By all means he must be blinded,  
 If my counsel be but minded.

*Semichorus II.*

Happy thou made odorous 495  
 With the dew which sweet grapes weep,  
 To the village hastening thus,  
 Seek the vines that soothe to sleep;  
 Having first embraced thy friend,  
 Thou in luxury without end, 500  
 With the strings of yellow hair,  
 Of thy voluptuous leman fair,  
 Shalt sit playing on a bed! —  
 Speak! what door is openèd?

*Cyclops.*

Ha! ha! ha! I'm full of wine, 505  
 Heavy with the joy divine,  
 With the young feast oversated;  
 Like a merchant's vessel freighted  
 To the water's edge, my crop  
 Is laden to the gullet's top. 510  
 The fresh meadow grass of spring  
 Tempts me forth thus wandering  
 To my brothers on the mountains,  
 Who shall share the wine's sweet fountains.  
 Bring the cask, O stranger, bring! 515

*Chorus.*

One with eyes the fairest  
 Cometh from his dwelling;  
 Some one loves thee, rarest,  
 Bright beyond my telling. 520  
 In thy grace thou shinest  
 Like some nymph divinest  
 In her caverns dewy:—  
 All delights pursue thee,  
 Soon pied flowers, sweet-breathing,  
 Shall thy head be wreathing. 525

- Ulysses.* Listen, O Cyclops, for I am well skilled  
 In Bacchus, whom I gave thee of to drink.  
*Cyclops.* What sort of God is Bacchus then accounted?  
*Ulysses.* The greatest among men for joy of life.  
*Cyclops.* I gulped him down with very great delight. 530  
*Ulysses.* This is a God who never injures men.  
*Cyclops.* How does the God like living in a skin?  
*Ulysses.* He is content wherever he is put.  
*Cyclops.* Gods should not have their body in a skin.  
*Ulysses.* If he gives joy, what is his skin to you? 535  
*Cyclops.* I hate the skin, but love the wine within.  
*Ulysses.* Stay here now: drink, and make your spirit glad.  
*Cyclops.* Should I not share this liquor with my brothers?  
*Ulysses.* Keep it yourself, and be more honoured so.  
*Cyclops.* I were more useful, giving to my friends. 540  
*Ulysses.* But village mirth breeds contests, broils, and blows.  
*Cyclops.* When I am drunk none shall lay hands on me.—  
*Ulysses.* A drunken man is better within doors.  
*Cyclops.* He is a fool, who drinking, loves not mirth.  
*Cyclops.* But he is wise, who drunk, remains at home. 545  
*Cyclops.* What shall I do, Silenus? Shall I stay?  
*Silenus.* Stay—for what need have you of pot companions?  
*Cyclops.* Indeed this place is closely carpeted  
 With flowers and grass.  
*Silenus.* And in the sun-warm noon  
 'Tis sweet to drink. Lie down beside me now, 550  
 Placing your mighty sides upon the ground.  
*Cyclops.* What do you put the cup behind me for?  
*Silenus.* That no one here may touch it.  
*Cyclops.* Thievish one!  
 You want to drink;—here place it in the midst.  
 And thou, O stranger, tell how art thou called? 555  
*Ulysses.* My name is Nobody. What favour now  
 Shall I receive to praise you at your hands?  
*Cyclops.* I'll feast on you the last of your companions.  
*Ulysses.* You grant your guest a fair reward, O Cyclops.  
*Cyclops.* Ha! what is this? Stealing the wine, you rogue!  
*Silenus.* It was this stranger kissing me because 561  
 I looked so beautiful.  
*Cyclops.* You shall repent  
 For kissing the coy wine that loves you not.  
*Silenus.* By Jupiter! you said that I am fair.  
*Cyclops.* Pour out, and only give me the cup full. 565  
*Silenus.* How is it mixed? let me observe.  
*Cyclops.* Curse you!  
 Give it me so.  
*Silenus.* Not till I see you wear

That coronal, and taste the cup to you.

*Cyclops.* Thou wily traitor!

*Silenus.* But the wine is sweet.

Ay, you will roar if you are caught in drinking. 570

*Cyclops.* See now, my lip is clean and all my beard.

*Silenus.* Now put your elbow right and drink again.

As you see me drink— . . .

*Cyclops.* How now?

*Silenus.* Ye Gods, what a delicious gulp!

*Cyclops.* Guest, take it;—you pour out the wine for me. 575

*Ulysses.* The wine is well accustomed to my hand.

*Cyclops.* Pour out the wine!

*Ulysses.* I pour; only be silent.

*Cyclops.* Silence is a hard task to him who drinks.

*Ulysses.* Take it and drink it off; leave not a dreg.

Oh, that the drinker died with his own draught! 580

*Cyclops.* Papai! the vine must be a sapient plant.

*Ulysses.* If you drink much after a mighty feast,

Moistening your thirsty maw, you will sleep well;

If you leave aught, Bacchus will dry you up.

*Cyclops.* Ho! ho! I can scarce rise. What pure delight!

The heavens and earth appear to whirl about 586

Confusedly. I see the throne of Jove

And the clear congregation of the Gods.

Now if the Graces tempted me to kiss

I would not—for the loveliest of them all 590

I would not leave this Ganymede.

*Silenus.* Polypheme,

I am the Ganymede of Jupiter.

*Cyclops.* By Jove, you are; I bore you off from Dardanus.

#### ULYSSES and the CHORUS

*Ulysses.* Come, boys of Bacchus, children of high race,

This man within is folded up in sleep, 595

And soon will vomit flesh from his fell maw;

The brand under the shed thrusts out its smoke,

No preparation needs, but to burn out

The monster's eye;—but bear yourselves like men.

*Chorus.* We will have courage like the adamant rock, 600

All things are ready for you here; go in,

Before our father shall perceive the noise.

*Ulysses.* Vulcan, Aetnean king! burn out with fire

The shining eye of this thy neighbouring monster!

And thou, O Sleep, nursling of gloomy Night, 605

Descend unmixed on this God-hated beast,

And suffer not Ulysses and his comrades,

Returning from their famous Trojan toils,

To perish by this man, who cares not either  
 For God or mortal; or I needs must think 610  
 That Chance is a supreme divinity,  
 And things divine are subject to her power.

*Chorus.*

Soon a crab the throat will seize  
 Of him who feeds upon his guest,  
 Fire will burn his lamp-like eyes 615  
 In revenge of such a feast!  
 A great oak stump now is lying  
 In the ashes yet undying.  
 Come, Maron, come!  
 Raging let him fix the doom, 620  
 Let him tear the eyelid up  
 Of the Cyclops—that his cup  
 May be evil!  
 Oh! I long to dance and revel  
 With sweet Bromian, long desired, 625  
 In loved ivy wreaths attired;  
 Leaving this abandoned home—  
 Will the moment ever come?

*Ulysses.* Be silent, ye wild things! Nay, hold your peace,  
 And keep your lips quite close; dare not to breathe, 630  
 Or spit, or e'en wink, lest ye wake the monster,  
 Until his eye be tortured out with fire.

*Chorus.* Nay, we are silent, and we chaw the air.

*Ulysses.* Come now, and lend a hand to the great stake  
 Within—it is delightfully red hot. 635

*Chorus.* You then command who first should seize the stake  
 To burn the Cyclops' eye, that all may share  
 In the great enterprise.

*Semichorus I.* We are too far;  
 We cannot at this distance from the door  
 Thrust fire into his eye.

*Semichorus II.* And we just now  
 Have become lame! cannot move hand or foot. 640

*Chorus.* The same thing has occurred to us,—our ankles  
 Are sprained with standing here, I know not how.

*Ulysses.* What, sprained with standing still?

*Chorus.* And there is dust  
 Or ashes in our eyes, I know not whence. 645

*Ulysses.* Cowardly dogs! ye will not aid me then?

*Chorus.* With pitying my own back and my back-bone,  
 And with not wishing all my teeth knocked out,  
 This cowardice comes of itself—but stay,

- I know a famous Orphic incantation  
To make the brand stick of its own accord  
Into the skull of this one-eyed son of Earth.  
*Ulysses.* Of old I knew ye thus by nature; now  
I know ye better.—I will use the aid  
Of my own comrades. Yet though weak of hand 655  
Speak cheerfully, that so ye may awaken  
The courage of my friends with your blithe words.  
*Chorus.* This I will do with peril of my life,  
And blind you with my exhortations, Cyclops.  
Hasten and thrust, 660  
And parch up to dust,  
The eye of the beast  
Who feeds on his guest.  
Burn and blind  
The Aetnean hind! 665  
Scoop and draw,  
But beware lest he claw  
Your limbs near his maw.  
*Cyclops.* Ah me! my eyesight is parched up to cinders.  
*Chorus.* What a sweet paeon; sing me that again! 670  
*Cyclops.* Ah me! indeed, what woe has fallen upon me!  
But, wretched nothings, think ye not to flee  
Out of this rock; I, standing at the outlet,  
Will bar the way and catch you as you pass.  
*Chorus.* What are you roaring out, Cyclops?  
*Cyclops.* I perish! 675  
*Chorus.* For you are wicked.  
*Cyclops.* And besides miserable.  
*Chorus.* What, did you fall into the fire when drunk?  
*Cyclops.* 'Twas Nobody destroyed me.  
*Chorus.* Why then no one  
Can be to blame.  
*Cyclops.* I say 'twas Nobody  
Who blinded me.  
*Chorus.* Why then you are not blind. 680  
*Cyclops.* I wish you were as blind as I am.  
*Chorus.* Nay,  
It cannot be that no one made you blind.  
*Cyclops.* You jeer me; where, I ask, is Nobody?  
*Chorus.* Nowhere, O Cyclops.  
*Cyclops.* It was that stranger ruined me:—the wretch 685  
First gave me wine and then burned out my eye,  
For wine is strong and hard to struggle with.  
Have they escaped, or are they yet within?  
*Chorus.* They stand under the darkness of the rock  
And cling to it.

- Cyclops.* At my right hand or left? 690  
*Chorus.* Close on your right.  
*Cyclops.* Where?  
*Chorus.* Near the rock itself.  
 You have them.  
*Cyclops.* Oh, misfortune on misfortune!  
 I've cracked my skull.  
*Chorus.* Now they escape you—there.  
*Cyclops.* Not there, although you say so.  
*Chorus.* Not on that side.  
*Cyclops.* Where then?  
*Chorus.* They creep about you on your left. 695  
*Cyclops.* Ah! I am mocked! They jeer me in my ills.  
*Chorus.* Not there! he is a little there beyond you.  
*Cyclops.* Detested wretch! where are you?  
*Ulysses.* Far from you  
 I keep with care this body of Ulysses.  
*Cyclops.* What do you say? You proffer a new name. 700  
*Ulysses.* My father named me so; and I have taken  
 A full revenge for your unnatural feast;  
 I should have done ill to have burned down Troy  
 And not revenged the murder of my comrades.  
*Cyclops.* Ai! ai! the ancient oracle is accomplished; 705  
 It said that I should have my eye sight blinded  
 By your coming from Troy, yet it foretold  
 That you should pay the penalty for this  
 By wandering long over the homeless sea.  
*Ulysses.* I bid thee weep—consider what I say; 710  
 I go towards the shore to drive my ship  
 To mine own land, o'er the Sicilian wave.  
*Cyclops.* Not so, if whelming you with this huge stone,  
 I can crush you and all your men together;  
 I will descend upon the shore, though blind, 715  
 Groping my way adown the steep ravine.  
*Chorus.* And we, the shipmates of Ulysses now,  
 Will serve our Bacchus all our happy lives.

## EPIGRAMS

## I.—TO STELLA

## FROM THE GREEK OF PLATO

THOU wert the morning star among the living,  
 Ere thy fair light had fled;  
 Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving  
 New splendour to the dead.



## II.—KISSING HELENA

FROM THE GREEK OF PLATO

KISSING Helena, together  
 With my kiss, my soul beside it  
 Came to my lips, and there I kept it,—  
 For the poor thing had wandered thither,  
 To follow where the kiss should guide it, 5  
 Oh, cruel I, to intercept it!

## III.—SPIRIT OF PLATO

FROM THE GREEK

EAGLE! why soarest thou above that tomb?  
 To what sublime and starry-paven home  
 Floatest thou?—  
 I am the image of swift Plato's spirit,  
 Ascending heaven; Athens doth inherit 5  
 His corpse below.

## IV.—CIRCUMSTANCE

FROM THE GREEK

A MAN who was about to hang himself,  
 Finding a purse, then threw away his rope;  
 The owner, coming to reclaim his pelf,  
 The halter found, and used it. So is Hope 5  
 Changed for Despair—one laid upon the shelf,  
 We take the other. Under Heaven's high cope  
 Fortune is God—all you endure and do  
 Depends on circumstance as much as you.

## FRAGMENT OF THE ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ADONIS

FROM THE GREEK OF BION

I MOURN Adonis dead—loveliest Adonis—  
 Dead, dead Adonis—and the Loves lament.  
 Sleep no more, Venus, wrapped in purple woof—  
 Wake violet-stolèd queen, and weave the crown 5  
 Of Death,—'tis Misery calls,—for he is dead.

The lovely one lies wounded in the mountains,  
 His white thigh struck with the white tooth; he scarce  
 Yet breathes; and Venus hangs in agony there.  
 The dark blood wanders o'er his snowy limbs,  
 His eyes beneath their lids are lustreless, 10  
 The rose has fled from his wan lips, and there  
 That kiss is dead, which Venus gathers yet.



Diffuse its languid love; let roses blush,  
 Anemones grow paler for the loss  
 Their dells have known; and thou, O hyacinth, 10  
 Utter thy legend now—yet more, dumb flower,  
 Than ‘Ah! alas!’—thine is no common grief—  
 Bion the [sweetest singer] is no more.

## FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS

*Τὰν ἄλα τὰν γλαυκὰν ὅταν ὄνεμος ἀτρεΐμα βάλλῃ—κ.τ.λ.*

WHEN winds that move not its calm surface sweep  
 The azure sea, I love the land no more;  
 The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep  
 Tempt my unquiet mind.—But when the roar  
 Of Ocean’s gray abyss resounds, and foam 5  
 Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst,  
 I turn from the drear aspect to the home  
 Of Earth and its deep woods, where, interspersed,  
 When winds blow loud, pines make sweet melody.  
 Whose house is some lone bark, whose toil the sea, 10  
 Whose prey the wandering fish, an evil lot  
 Has chosen.—But I my languid limbs will fling  
 Beneath the plane, where the brook’s murmuring  
 Moves the calm spirit, but disturbs it not.

## PAN, ECHO, AND THE SATYR

FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS

PAN loved his neighbour Echo—but that child  
 Of Earth and Air pined for the Satyr leaping;  
 The Satyr loved with wasting madness wild  
 The bright nymph Lyda,—and so three went weeping.  
 As Pan loved Echo, Echo loved the Satyr, 5  
 The Satyr, Lyda; and so love consumed them.—  
 And thus to each—which was a woful matter—  
 To bear what they inflicted Justice doomed them;  
 For, inasmuch as each might hate the lover,  
 Each, loving, so was hated.—Ye that love not 10  
 Be warned—in thought turn this example over,  
 That when ye love, the like return ye prove not.

## FROM VERGIL’S TENTH ECLOGUE

[Vv. 1-26]

MELODIOUS Arethusa, o’er my verse  
 Shed thou once more the spirit of thy stream:  
 Who denies verse to Gallus? So, when thou

Glide beneath the green and purple gleam  
 Of Syracusan waters, mayst thou flow 5  
 Unmingled with the bitter Doric dew!  
 Begin, and, whilst the goats are browsing now  
 The soft leaves, in our way let us pursue  
 The melancholy loves of Gallus. List!  
 We sing not to the dead: the wild woods knew 10  
 His sufferings, and their echoes . . .  
 Young Naiads, . . . in what far woodlands wild  
 Wandered ye when unworthy love possessed  
 Your Gallus? Not where Pindus is up-piled,  
 Nor where Parnassus' sacred mount, nor where 15  
 Aonian Aganippe expands . . .  
 The laurels and the myrtle-copses dim.  
 The pine-encircled mountain, Maenalus,  
 The cold crags of Lycaeus, weep for him;  
 And Sylvan, crowned with rustic coronals, 20  
 Came shaking in his speed the budding wands  
 And heavy lilies which he bore: we knew  
 Pan the Arcadian.  
 . . . . .  
 'What madness is this, Gallus? Thy heart's care  
 With willing steps pursues another there.' 25

# FROM VERGIL'S FOURTH GEORGIC

[Vv. 360 et seq.]

AND the cloven waters like a chasm of mountains  
 Stood, and received him in its mighty portal  
 And let him through the deep's untrampled fountains  
 He went in wonder through the path immortal  
 Of his great Mother and her humid reign 5  
 And groves profaned not by the step of mortal  
 Which sounded as he passed, and lakes which rain  
 Replenished not girt round by marble caves  
 'Wildered by the watery motion of the main  
 Half 'wildered he beheld the bursting waves 10  
 Of every stream beneath the mighty earth  
 Phasis and Lycus which the sand paves,  
 [And] the chasm where old Enipeus has its birth  
 And father Tyber and Anienas[?] glow  
 And whence Caicus, Mysian stream, comes forth 15  
 And rock-resounding Hypanis, and thou  
 Eridanus who bearest like empire's sign  
 Two golden horns upon thy taurine brow

Thou than whom none of the streams divine  
 Through garden-fields and meads with fiercer power, 20  
 Burst in their tumult on the purple brine.

## SONNET

FROM THE ITALIAN OF DANTE

*Dante Alighieri to Guido Cavalcanti*

GUIDO, I would that Lapo, thou, and I,  
 Led by some strong enchantment, might ascend  
 A magic ship, whose charmed sails should fly  
 With winds at will where'er our thoughts might wend, 5  
 So that no change, nor any evil chance  
 Should mar our joyous voyage; but it might be,  
 That even satiety should still enhance  
 Between our hearts their strict community:  
 And that the bounteous wizard then would place 10  
 Vanna and Bice and my gentle love,  
 Companions of our wandering, and would grace  
 With passionate talk, wherever we might rove,  
 Our time, and each were as content and free  
 As I believe that thou and I should be.

## THE FIRST CANZONE OF THE CONVITO

FROM THE ITALIAN OF DANTE

## I

YE who intelligent the Third Heaven move,  
 Hear the discourse which is within my heart,  
 Which cannot be declared, it seems so new.  
 The Heaven whose course follows your power and art, 5  
 Oh, gentle creatures that ye are! me drew,  
 And therefore may I dare to speak to you,  
 Even of the life which now I live—and yet  
 I pray that ye will hear me when I cry,  
 And tell of mine own heart this novelty; 10  
 How the lamenting Spirit moans in it,  
 And how a voice there murmurs against her  
 Who came on the refulgence of your sphere.

## II

A sweet Thought, which was once the life within  
 This heavy heart, many a time and oft  
 Went up before our Father's feet, and there 15  
 It saw a glorious Lady throned aloft;  
 And its sweet talk of her my soul did win,

So that I said, 'Thither I too will fare.'  
 That Thought is fled, and one doth now appear  
 Which tyrannizes me with such fierce stress, 20  
 That my heart trembles—ye may see it leap—  
 And on another Lady bids me keep  
 Mine eyes, and says—Who would have blessedness  
 Let him but look upon that Lady's eyes,  
 Let him not fear the agony of sighs. 25

## III

This lowly Thought, which once would talk with me  
 Of a bright seraph sitting crowned on high,  
 Found such a cruel foe it died, and so  
 My Spirit wept, the grief is hot even now—  
 And said, Alas for me! how swift could flee 30  
 That piteous Thought which did my life console!  
 And the afflicted one questioning  
 Mine eyes, if such a Lady saw they never,  
 And why they would . . .  
 I said: 'Beneath those eyes might stand for ever 35  
 He whom                    regards must kill with . . .  
 To have known their power stood me in little stead,  
 Those eyes have looked on me, and I am dead.'

## IV

'Thou art not dead, but thou hast wanderèd,  
 Thou Soul of ours, who thyself dost fret,' 40  
 A Spirit of gentle Love beside me said;  
 For that fair Lady, whom thou dost regret,  
 Hath so transformed the life which thou hast led,  
 Thou scornest it, so worthless art thou made.  
 And see how meek, how pitiful, how staid, 45  
 Yet courteous, in her majesty she is.  
 And still call thou her Woman in thy thought;  
 Her whom, if thou thyself deceivest not,  
 Thou wilt behold decked with such loveliness,  
 That thou wilt cry [Love] only Lord, lo! here 50  
 Thy handmaiden, do what thou wilt with her.

## V

My song, I fear that thou wilt find but few  
 Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning  
 Of such hard matter dost thou entertain.  
 Whence, if by misadventure chance should bring 55  
 Thee to base company, as chance may do,  
 Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,  
 I prithee comfort thy sweet self again,

My last delight; tell them that they are dull,  
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

60

## MATILDA GATHERING FLOWERS

FROM THE PURGATORIO OF DANTE, CANTO XXVIII, ll. 1-51

AND earnest to explore within—around—  
The divine wood, whose thick green living woof  
Tempered the young day to the sight—I wound

Up the green slope, beneath the forest's roof,  
With slow, soft steps leaving the mountain's steep,  
And sought those inmost labyrinths, motion-proof

Against the air, that in that stillness deep  
And solemn, struck upon my forehead bare,  
The slow, soft stroke of a continuous . . .

In which the leaves tremblingly were  
All bent towards that part where earliest  
The sacred hill obscures the morning air.

10

Yet were they not so shaken from the rest,  
But that the birds, perched on the utmost spray,  
Incessantly renewing their blithe quest,

15

With perfect joy received the early day,  
Singing within the glancing leaves, whose sound  
Kept a low burden to their roundelay,

Such as from bough to bough gathers around  
The pine forest on bleak Chiassi's shore,  
When Aeolus Sirocco has unbound.

20

My slow steps had already borne me o'er  
Such space within the antique wood, that I  
Perceived not where I entered any more,—

When, lo! a stream whose little waves went by,  
Bending towards the left through grass that grew  
Upon its bank, impeded suddenly

25

My going on. Water of purest hue  
On earth, would appear turbid and impure  
Compared with this, whose unconcealing dew,

30

Dark, dark, yet clear, moved under the obscure  
Eternal shades, whose interwoven looms  
The rays of moon or sunlight ne'er endure.

I moved not with my feet, but mid the glooms  
Pierced with my charmed eye, contemplating  
The mighty multitude of fresh May blooms

35

Which starred that night, when, even as a thing  
That suddenly, for blank astonishment,  
Charms every sense, and makes all thought take wing,—

A solitary woman! and she went 40  
Singing and gathering flower after flower,  
With which her way was painted and besprent.

‘Bright lady, who, if looks had ever power  
To bear true witness of the heart within,  
Dost bask under the beams of love, come lower 45

Towards this bank. I prithee let me win  
This much of thee, to come, that I may hear  
Thy song: like Proserpine, in Enna’s glen,

Thou seemest to my fancy, singing here  
And gathering flowers, as that fair maiden when 50  
She lost the Spring, and Ceres her, more dear.’

### FRAGMENT

ADAPTED FROM THE VITA NUOVA OF DANTE

WHAT Mary is when she a little smiles  
I cannot even tell or call to mind,  
It is a miracle so new, so rare.

### UGOLINO

INFERNO xxxiii. 22-75

Now had the loophole of that dungeon, still  
Which bears the name of Famine’s Tower from me,  
And where ’tis fit that many another will

Be doomed to linger in captivity,  
Shown through its narrow opening in my cell 5  
*Moon after moon slow waning, when a sleep,*

*That of the future burst the veil, in dream  
Visited me. It was a slumber deep  
And evil; for I saw, or I did seem*

To see, *that* tyrant Lord his revels keep, 10  
The leader of the cruel hunt to them,  
Chasing the wolf and wolf-cubs up the steep

Ascent, that from *the Pisan is the screen  
Of Lucca*; with him Gualandi came,  
Sismondi, and Lanfranchi, *bloodhounds lean,* 15

*Trained to the sport and eager for the game  
Wide ranging in his front*; but soon were seen  
Though by so short a course, with *spirits tame,*



The father and *his whelps* to flag at once,  
 And then the sharp fangs gored their bosoms deep 20  
 Ere morn I roused myself, and heard my sons,

For they were with me, moaning in their sleep,  
 And begging bread. Ah, for those darling ones!  
 Right cruel art thou, if thou dost not weep

In thinking of my soul's sad augury; 25  
 And if thou weapest not now, weep never more!  
 They were already waked, as wont drew nigh

The allotted hour for food, and in that hour  
 Each drew a presage from his dream. When I  
*Heard locked beneath me of that horrible tower* 30

*The outlet; then into their eyes alone*  
*I looked to read myself*, without a sign  
 Or word. I wept not—turned within to stone.

They wept aloud, and little Anselm mine,  
 Said—'twas my youngest, dearest little one,— 35  
 'What ails thee, father? Why look so at thine?'

In all that day, and all the following night,  
 I wept not, nor replied; but when to shine  
 Upon the world, not us, came forth the light

Of the new sun, and thwart my prison thrown 40  
 Gleamed through its narrow chink, a doleful sight,  
*Three faces, each the reflex of my own,*

*Were imaged by its faint and ghastly ray,*  
 Then I, of either hand unto the bone,  
 Gnawed, in my agony; and thinking they 45

'Twas done from sudden pangs, in their excess,  
 All of a sudden raise themselves, and say,  
 'Father! our woes, so great, were yet the less

Would you but eat of us,—'twas *you who clad*  
*Our bodies in these weeds of wretchedness;* 50  
*Despoil them.*' Not to make their hearts more sad,

I *hushed* myself. That day is at its close,—  
 Another—still we were all mute. Oh, had  
 The obdurate earth opened to end our woes!

The fourth day dawned, and when the new sun shone, 55  
 Outstretched himself before me as it rose  
 My Gaddo, saying, 'Help, father! hast thou none

For thine own child—is there no help from thee?  
 He died—there at my feet—and one by one,  
 I saw them fall, plainly as you see me.

60

Between the fifth and sixth day, ere 'twas dawn,  
 I found *myself blind-groping o'er the three*.  
 Three days I called them after they were gone.  
 Famine of grief can get the mastery.

## SONNET

FROM THE ITALIAN OF CAVALCANTI

GUIDO CAVALCANTI TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

RETURNING from its daily quest, my Spirit  
 Changed thoughts and vile in thee doth weep to find:  
 It grieves me that thy mild and gentle mind  
 Those ample virtues which it did inherit  
 Has lost. Once thou didst loathe the multitude  
 Of blind and madding men—I then loved thee—  
 I loved thy lofty songs and that sweet mood  
 When thou wert faithful to thyself and me.  
 I dare not now through thy degraded state  
 Own the delight thy strains inspire—in vain  
 I seek what once thou wert—we cannot meet  
 And we were wont. Again and yet again  
 Ponder my words: so the false Spirit shall fly  
 And leave to thee thy true integrity.

5

10

## SCENES FROM THE MAGICO PRODIGIOSO

FROM THE SPANISH OF CALDERON

SCENE I.—*Enter CYPRIAN, dressed as a Student; CLARIN and  
 MOSCON as poor Scholars, with books.*

*Cyprian.* In the sweet solitude of this calm place,  
 This intricate wild wilderness of trees  
 And flowers and undergrowth of odorous plants,  
 Leave me; the books you brought out of the house  
 To me are ever best society.  
 And while with glorious festival and song,  
 Antioch now celebrates the consecration  
 Of a proud temple to great Jupiter,  
 And bears his image in loud jubilee  
 To its new shrine, I would consume what still  
 Lives of the dying day in studious thought,  
 Far from the throng and turmoil. You, my friends,  
 Go, and enjoy the festival; it will

5

10

Be worth your pains. You may return for me  
When the sun seeks its grave among the billows 15  
Which, among dim gray clouds on the horizon,  
Dance like white plumes upon a hearse;—and here  
I shall expect you.

*Moscon.* I cannot bring my mind,  
Great as my haste to see the festival  
Certainly is, to leave you, Sir, without 20  
Just saying some three or four thousand words.  
How is it possible that on a day  
Of such festivity, you can be content  
To come forth to a solitary country  
With three or four old books, and turn your back 25  
On all this mirth?

*Clarín.* My master's in the right;  
There is not anything more tiresome  
Than a procession day, with troops, and priests,  
And dances, and all that.

*Moscon.* From first to last,  
Clarín, you are a temporizing flatterer; 30  
You praise not what you feel but what he does;—  
Toadeater!

*Clarín.* You lie—under a mistake—  
For this is the most civil sort of lie  
That can be given to a man's face. I now  
Say what I think.

*Cyprian.* Enough, you foolish fellows! 35  
Puffed up with your own doting ignorance,  
You always take the two sides of one question.  
Now go; and as I said, return for me  
When night falls, veiling in its shadows wide  
This glorious fabric of the universe. 40

*Moscon.* How happens it, although you can maintain  
The folly of enjoying festivals,  
That yet you go there?

*Clarín.* Nay, the consequence  
Is clear:—who ever did what he advises  
Others to do?—

*Moscon.* Would that my feet were wings, 45  
So would I fly to Livia. [Exit.

*Clarín.* To speak truth,  
Livia is she who has surprised my heart;  
But he is more than half-way there.—Soho!  
Livia, I come; good sport, Livia, soho! [Exit. 50

*Cyprian.* Now, since I am alone, let me examine  
The question which has long disturbed my mind  
With doubt, since first I read in Plinius

The words of mystic import and deep sense  
 In which he defines God. My intellect  
 Can find no God with whom these marks and signs 55  
 Fitly agree. It is a hidden truth  
 Which I must fathom.

[CYPRIAN reads; the DAEMON, dressed in a Court dress, enters.]

*Daemon.* Search even as thou wilt,  
 But thou shalt never find what I can hide.

*Cyprian.* What noise is that among the boughs? Who moves?  
 What art thou?—

*Daemon.* 'Tis a foreign gentleman. 60  
 Even from this morning I have lost my way  
 In this wild place; and my poor horse at last,  
 Quite overcome, has stretched himself upon  
 The enamelled tapestry of this mossy mountain,  
 And feeds and rests at the same time. I was 65  
 Upon my way to Antioch upon business  
 Of some importance, but wrapped up in cares  
 (Who is exempt from this inheritance?)  
 I parted from my company, and lost  
 My way, and lost my servants and my comrades. 70

*Cyprian.* 'Tis singular that even within the sight  
 Of the high towers of Antioch you could lose  
 Your way. Of all the avenues and green paths  
 Of this wild wood there is not one but leads,  
 As to its centre, to the walls of Antioch; 75  
 Take which you will, you cannot miss your road.

*Daemon.* And such is ignorance! Even in the sight  
 Of knowledge, it can draw no profit from it.  
 But as it still is early, and as I  
 Have no acquaintances in Antioch, 80  
 Being a stranger there, I will even wait  
 The few surviving hours of the day,  
 Until the night shall conquer it. I see  
 Both by your dress and by the books in which  
 You find delight and company, that you 85  
 Are a great student;—for my part, I feel  
 Much sympathy in such pursuits.

*Cyprian.* Have you  
 Studied much?

*Daemon.* No,—and yet I know enough  
 Not to be wholly ignorant.

*Cyprian.* Pray, Sir,  
 What science may you know?—

*Daemon.* Many.

*Cyprian.* Alas! 90

Much pains must we expend on one alone,  
And even then attain it not;—but you  
Have the presumption to assert that you  
Know many without study.

*Daemon.* And with truth.  
For in the country whence I come the sciences  
Require no learning,—they are known.

95

*Cyprian.* Oh, would  
I were of that bright country! for in this  
The more we study, we the more discover  
Our ignorance.

*Daemon.* It is so true, that I  
Had so much arrogance as to oppose  
The chair of the most high Professorship,  
And obtained many votes, and, though I lost,  
The attempt was still more glorious, than the failure  
Could be dishonourable. If you believe not,  
Let us refer it to dispute respecting  
That which you know the best, and although I  
Know not the opinion you maintain, and though  
It be the true one, I will take the contrary.

100

105

*Cyprian.* The offer gives me pleasure. I am now  
Debating with myself upon a passage  
Of Plinius, and my mind is racked with doubt  
To understand and know who is the God  
Of whom he speaks.

110

*Daemon.* It is a passage, if  
I recollect it right, couched in these words:  
'God is one supreme goodness, one pure essence,  
One substance, and one sense, all sight, all hands.'

115

*Cyprian.* 'Tis true.

*Daemon.* What difficulty find you here?

*Cyprian.* I do not recognize among the Gods  
The God defined by Plinius; if he must  
Be supreme goodness, even Jupiter  
Is not supremely good; because we see  
His deeds are evil, and his attributes  
Tainted with mortal weakness; in what manner  
Can supreme goodness be consistent with  
The passions of humanity?

120

*Daemon.* The wisdom  
Of the old world masked with the names of Gods  
The attributes of Nature and of Man;  
A sort of popular philosophy.

125

*Cyprian.* This reply will not satisfy me, for  
Such awe is due to the high name of God  
That ill should never be imputed. Ther,

130

Examining the question with more care,  
 It follows, that the Gods would always will  
 That which is best, were they supremely good.  
 How then does one will one thing, one another? 135  
 And that you may not say that I allege  
 Poetical or philosophic learning:—  
 Consider the ambiguous responses  
 Of their oracular statues; from two shrines  
 Two armies shall obtain the assurance of 140  
 One victory. Is it not indisputable  
 That two contending wills can never lead  
 To the same end? And, being opposite,  
 If one be good, is not the other evil?  
 Evil in God is inconceivable; 145  
 But supreme goodness fails among the Gods  
 Without their union.

*Daemon.* I deny your major.  
 These responses are means towards some end  
 Unfathomed by our intellectual beam.  
 They are the work of Providence, and more 150  
 The battle's loss may profit those who lose,  
 Than victory advantage those who win.

*Cyprian.* That I admit; and yet that God should not  
 (Falsehood is incompatible with deity)  
 Assure the victory; it would be enough 155  
 To have permitted the defeat. If God  
 Be all sight,—God, who had beheld the truth,  
 Would not have given assurance of an end  
 Never to be accomplished: thus, although  
 The Deity may according to his attributes 160  
 Be well distinguished into persons, yet  
 Even in the minutest circumstance  
 His essence must be one.

*Daemon.* To attain the end  
 The affections of the actors in the scene  
 Must have been thus influenced by his voice. 165

*Cyprian.* But for a purpose thus subordinate  
 He might have employed Genii, good or evil,—  
 A sort of spirits called so by the learned,  
 Who roam about inspiring good or evil,  
 And from whose influence and existence we 170  
 May well infer our immortality.  
 Thus God might easily, without descent  
 To a gross falsehood in his proper person,  
 Have moved the affections by this mediation  
 To the just point.

*Daemon.* These trifling contradictions 175

Do not suffice to impugn the unity  
 Of the high Gods; in things of great importance  
 They still appear unanimous; consider  
 That glorious fabric, man,—his workmanship  
 Is stamped with one conception.

*Cyprian.* Who made man 180  
 Must have, methinks, the advantage of the others.

If they are equal, might they not have risen  
 In opposition to the work, and being  
 All hands, according to our author here,  
 Have still destroyed even as the other made? 185  
 If equal in their power, unequal only  
 In opportunity, which of the two  
 Will remain conqueror?

*Daemon.* On impossible  
 And false hypothesis there can be built  
 No argument. Say, what do you infer 190  
 From this?

*Cyprian.* That there must be a mighty God  
 Of supreme goodness and of highest grace,  
 All sight, all hands, all truth, infallible,  
 Without an equal and without a rival,  
 The cause of all things and the effect of nothing, 195  
 One power, one will, one substance, and one essence.  
 And, in whatever persons, one or two,  
 His attributes may be distinguished, one  
 Sovereign power, one solitary essence,  
 One cause of all cause. [They rise. 200

*Daemon.* How can I impugn  
 So clear a consequence?

*Cyprian.* Do you regret  
 My victory?

*Daemon.* Who but regrets a check  
 In rivalry of wit? I could reply  
 And urge new difficulties, but will now  
 Depart, for I hear steps of men approaching, 205  
 And it is time that I should now pursue  
 My journey to the city.

*Cyprian.* Go in peace!

*Daemon.* Remain in peace!—Since thus it profits him  
 To study, I will wrap his senses up  
 In sweet oblivion of all thought but of 210  
 A piece of excellent beauty; and, as I  
 Have power given me to wage enmity  
 Against Justina's soul, I will extract  
 From one effect two vengeance.

*Cyprian.* I never [Aside and exit.

Met a more learnèd person. Let me now  
Revolve this doubt again with careful mind. 215  
[*He reads.*]

*FLORO and LELIO enter.*

*Lelio.* Here stop. These toppling rocks and tangled boughs,  
Impenetrable by the noonday beam,  
Shall be sole witnesses of what we——

*Floro.* Draw!  
If there were words, here is the place for deeds. 220

*Lelio.* Thou needest not instruct me; well I know  
That in the field, the silent tongue of steel  
Speaks thus,— [They fight.

*Cyprian.* Ha! what is this? *Lelio*,—*Floro*,  
Be it enough that *Cyprian* stands between you,  
Although unarmed.

*Lelio.* Whence comest thou, to stand  
Between me and my vengeance? 225

*Floro.* From what rocks  
And desert cells?

*Enter MOSCON and CLARIN.*

*Moscon.* Run! run! for where we left  
My master, I now hear the clash of swords.

*Clarín.* I never run to approach things of this sort,  
But only to avoid them. Sir! *Cyprian*! sir! 230

*Cyprian.* Be silent, fellows! What! two friends who are  
In blood and fame the eyes and hope of Antioch,  
One of the noble race of the Colalti,  
The other son o' the Governor, adventure  
And cast away, on some slight cause no doubt, 235  
Two iives, the honour of their country?

*Lelio.* *Cyprian*!  
Although my high respect towards your person  
Holds now my sword suspended, thou canst not  
Restore it to the slumber of the scabbard:  
Thou knowest more of science than the duel; 240  
For when two men of honour take the field,  
No counsel nor respect can make them friends  
But one must die in the dispute.

*Floro.* I pray  
That you depart hence with your people, and  
Leave us to finish what we have begun 245  
Without advantage.—

*Cyprian.* Though you may imagine  
That I know little of the laws of duel,  
Which vanity and valour instituted,  
You are in error. By my birth I am  
Held no less than yourselves to know the limits 250



Of honour and of infamy, nor has study  
 Quenched the free spirit which first ordered them;  
 And thus to me, as one well experienced  
 In the false quicksands of the sea of honour,  
 You may refer the merits of the case;  
 And if I should perceive in your relation  
 That either has the right to satisfaction  
 From the other, I give you my word of honour  
 To leave you.

255

*Lelio.* Under this condition then  
 I will relate the cause, and you will cede  
 And must confess the impossibility  
 Of compromise; for the same lady is  
 Beloved by Floro and myself.

260

*Floro.* It seems  
 Much to me that the light of day should look  
 Upon that idol of my heart—but he——  
 Leave us to fight, according to thy word.

265

*Cyprian.* Permit one question further: is the lady  
 Impossible to hope or not?

*Lelio.* She is  
 So excellent, that if the light of day  
 Should excite Floro's jealousy, it were  
 Without just cause, for even the light of day  
 Trembles to gaze on her.

270

*Cyprian.* Would you for your  
 Part, marry her?

*Floro.* Such is my confidence.

*Cyprian.* And you?

*Lelio.* Oh! would that I could lift my hope  
 So high, for though she is extremely poor,  
 Her virtue is her dowry.

275

*Cyprian.* And if you both  
 Would marry her, is it not weak and vain,  
 Culpable and unworthy, thus beforehand  
 To slur her honour? What would the world say  
 If one should slay the other, and if she  
 Should afterwards espouse the murderer?

280

*[The rivals agree to refer their quarrel to CYPRIAN; who in consequence visits JUSTINA, and becomes enamoured of her; she disdains him, and he retires to a solitary sea-shore.]*

## SCENE II

*Cyprian.*

O memory! permit it not  
 That the tyrant of my thought

Be another soul that still  
 Holds dominion o'er the will,  
 That would refuse, but can no more, 5  
 To bend, to tremble, and adore.  
 Vain idolatry!—I saw,  
     And gazing, became blind with error;  
 Weak ambition, which the awe  
     Of her presence bound to terror! 10  
 So beautiful she was—and I,  
 Between my love and jealousy,  
 Am so convulsed with hope and fear,  
 Unworthy as it may appear;—  
 So bitter is the life I live, 15  
 That, hear me, Hell! I now would give  
 To thy most detested spirit  
 My soul, for ever to inherit,  
 To suffer punishment and pine,  
 So this woman may be mine. 20  
 Hear'st thou, Hell! dost thou reject it?  
 My soul is offered!

*Daemon (unseen).* I accept it.

[*Tempest, with thunder and lightning.*

*Cyprian.*

What is this? ye heavens for ever pure,  
 At once intensely radiant and obscure!  
     Athwart the aethereal halls 25  
 The lightning's arrow and the thunder-balls  
     The day affright,  
     As from the horizon round,  
     Burst with earthquake sound,  
 In mighty torrents the electric fountains;— 30  
     Clouds quench the sun, and thunder-smoke  
 Strangles the air, and fire eclipses Heaven.  
     Philosophy, thou canst not even  
 Compel their causes underneath thy yoke:  
 From yonder clouds even to the waves below 35  
 The fragments of a single ruin choke  
     Imagination's flight;  
     For, on flakes of surge, like feathers light,  
 The ashes of the desolation, cast  
     Upon the gloomy blast, 40  
     Tell of the footsteps of the storm;  
 And nearer, see, the melancholy form  
 Of a great ship, the outcast of the sea,  
     Drives miserably!  
 And it must fly the pity of the port, 45

Or perish, and its last and sole resort  
 Is its own raging enemy,  
 The terror of the thrilling cry  
 Was a fatal prophecy

Of coming death, who hovers now

50

Upon that shattered prow,  
 That they who die not may be dying still.  
 And not alone the insane elements

Are populous with wild portents,  
 But that sad ship is as a miracle

55

Of sudden ruin, for it drives so fast  
 It seems as if it had arrayed its form  
 With the headlong storm.

It strikes—I almost feel the shock,—

It stumbles on a jagged rock,—

60

Sparkles of blood on the white foam are cast.

[*A tempest.*

*All exclaim (within).* We are all lost!

*Daemon (within).*

Now from this plank will I

Pass to the land and thus fulfil my scheme.

*Cyprian.*

As in contempt of the elemental rage

A man comes forth in safety, while the ship's

65

Great form is in a watery eclipse

Obliterated from the Ocean's page,

And round its wreck the huge sea-monsters sit,

A horrid conclave, and the whistling wave

Is heaped over its carcase, like a grave.

70

*The DAEMON enters, as escaped from the sea.*

*Daemon (aside).* It was essential to my purposes

To wake a tumult on the sapphire ocean,

That in this unknown form I might at length

Wipe out the blot of the discomfiture

Sustained upon the mountain, and assail

75

With a new war the soul of Cyprian,

Forging the instruments of his destruction

Even from his love and from his wisdom.—O

Belovèd earth, dear mother, in thy bosom

I seek a refuge from the monster who

80

Precipitates itself upon me.

*Cyprian.*

Friend,

Collect thyself; and be the memory

Of thy late suffering, and thy greatest sorrow

But as a shadow of the past,—for nothing

Beneath the circle of the moon, but flows

85

And changes, and can never know repose.

*Daemon.* And who art thou, before whose feet my fate  
has prostrated me?

*Cyprian.* One who, moved with pity,  
Would soothe its stings.

*Daemon.* Oh, that can never be!  
No solace can my lasting sorrows find.

90

*Cyprian.* Wherefore?

*Daemon.* Because my happiness is lost.  
Yet I lament what has long ceased to be  
The object of desire or memory,  
And my life is not life.

*Cyprian.* Now, since the fury  
Of this earthquaking hurricane is still,  
And the crystalline Heaven has reassumed  
Its windless calm so quickly, that it seems  
As if its heavy wrath had been awakened  
Only to overwhelm that vessel,—speak,  
Who art thou, and whence comest thou?

95

*Daemon.* Far more  
My coming hither cost, than thou hast seen  
Or I can tell. Among my misadventures  
This shipwreck is the least. Wilt thou hear?

100

*Cyprian.* Speak.

*Daemon.* Since thou desirest, I will then unveil  
Myself to thee;—for in myself I am  
A world of happiness and misery;  
This I have lost, and that I must lament  
Forever. In my attributes I stood  
So high and so heroically great,

105

In lineage so supreme, and with a genius  
Which penetrated with a glance the world  
Beneath my feet, that, won by my high merit,  
A king—whom I may call the King of kings,  
Because all others tremble in their pride  
Before the terrors of His countenance,

110

In His high palace roofed with brightest gems  
Of living light—call them the stars of Heaven—  
Named me His counsellor. But the high praise  
Stung me with pride and envy, and I rose  
In mighty competition, to ascend

115

His seat and place my foot triumphantly  
Upon His subject thrones. Chastised, I know  
The depth to which ambition falls; too mad  
Was the attempt, and yet more mad were now  
Repentance of the irrevocable deed:—

120

Therefore I chose this ruin, with the glory

125

Of not to be subdued, before the shame  
 Of reconciling me with Him who reigns  
 By coward cession.—Nor was I alone,  
 Nor am I now, nor shall I be alone; 130  
 And there was hope, and there may still be hope,  
 For many suffrages among His vassals  
 Hailed me their lord and king, and many still  
 Are mine, and many more, perchance shall be.  
 Thus vanquished, though in fact victorious, 135  
 I left His seat of empire, from mine eye  
 Shooting forth poisonous lightning, while my words  
 With inauspicious thunderings shook Heaven,  
 Proclaiming vengeance, public as my wrong,  
 And imprecating on His prostrate slaves 140  
 Rapine, and death, and outrage. Then I sailed  
 Over the mighty fabric of the world,—  
 A pirate ambushed in its pathless sands,  
 A lynx crouched watchfully among its caves  
 And craggy shores; and I have wandered over 145  
 The expanse of these wide wildernesses  
 In this great ship, whose bulk is now dissolved  
 In the light breathings of the invisible wind,  
 And which the sea has made a dustless ruin,  
 Seeking ever a mountain, through whose forests 150  
 I seek a man, whom I must now compel  
 To keep his word with me. I came arrayed  
 In tempest, and although my power could well  
 Bridle the forest winds in their career,  
 For other causes I forbore to soothe 155  
 Their fury to Favonian gentleness;  
 I could and would not; (thus I wake in him  
 A love of magic art). Let not this tempest, [Aside.  
 Nor the succeeding calm excite thy wonder;  
 For by my art the sun would turn as pale 160  
 As his weak sister with unwonted fear;  
 And in my wisdom are the orbs of Heaven  
 Written as in a record; I have pierced  
 The flaming circles of their wondrous spheres  
 And know them as thou knowest every corner 165  
 Of this dim spot. Let it not seem to thee  
 That I boast vainly; wouldst thou that I work  
 A charm over this waste and savage wood,  
 This Babylon of crags and aged trees,  
 Filling its leafy coverts with a horror 170  
 Thrilling and strange? I am the friendless guest  
 Of these wild oaks and pines—and as from thee  
 I have received the hospitality

Of this rude place, I offer thee the fruit  
 Of years of toil in recompense; whate'er  
 Thy wildest dream presented to thy thought  
 As object of desire, that shall be thine. 175

And thenceforth shall so firm an amity  
 'Twixt thee and me be, that neither Fortune,  
 The monstrous phantom which pursues success, 180  
 That careful miser, that free prodigal,  
 Who ever alternates, with changeful hand,  
 Evil and good, reproach and fame; nor Time,  
 That lodestar of the ages, to whose beam  
 The wingèd years speed o'er the intervals 185  
 Of their unequal revolutions; nor  
 Heaven itself, whose beautiful bright stars  
 Rule and adorn the world, can ever make  
 The least division between thee and me,  
 Since now I find a refuge in thy favour. 190

SCENE III.—*The DAEMON tempts JUSTINA, who is a Christian.*

*Daemon.*

Abyss of Hell! I call on thee,  
 Thou wild misrule of thine own anarchy!  
 From thy prison-house set free  
 The spirits of voluptuous death,  
 That with their mighty breath 5  
 They may destroy a world of virgin thoughts;  
 Let her chaste mind with fancies thick as motes  
 Be peopled from thy shadowy deep,  
 Till her guiltless fantasy  
 Full to overflowing be! 10  
 And with sweetest harmony,  
 Let birds, and flowers, and leaves, and all things move  
 To love, only to love.  
 Let nothing meet her eyes  
 But signs of Love's soft victories; 15  
 Let nothing meet her ear  
 But sounds of Love's sweet sorrow,  
 So that from faith no succour she may borrow,  
 But, guided by my spirit blind  
 And in a magic snare entwined, 20  
 She may now seek Cyprian.  
 Begin, while I in silence bind  
 My voice, when thy sweet song thou hast began.

*A Voice (within).*

What is the glory far above  
All else in human life?

*All.*

Love! love! 25

[*While these words are sung, the DAEMON goes out at one door, and JUSTINA enters at another.*

*The First Voice.*

There is no form in which the fire  
Of love its traces has impressed not.  
Man lives far more in love's desire  
Than by life's breath, soon possessed not. 30  
If all that lives must love or die,  
All shapes on earth, or sea, or sky,  
With one consent to Heaven cry  
That the glory far above  
All else in life is—

*All.*

Love! oh, Love!

*Justina.*

Thou melancholy Thought which art 35  
So flattering and so sweet, to thee  
When did I give the liberty  
Thus to afflict my heart?  
What is the cause of this new Power  
Which doth my fevered being move, 40  
Momently raging more and more?  
What subtle Pain is kindled now  
Which from my heart doth overflow  
Into my senses?—

*All.*

Love! oh, Love!

*Justina.*

'Tis that enamoured Nightingale 45  
Who gives me the reply;  
He ever tells the same soft tale  
Of passion and of constancy  
To his mate, who rapt and fond,  
Listening sits, a bough beyond. 50

Be silent, Nightingale—no more  
 Make me think, in hearing thee  
 Thus tenderly thy love deplore,  
     If a bird can feel his so,  
     What a man would feel for me. 55  
     And, voluptuous Vine, O thou  
 Who seekest most when least pursuing,—  
     To the trunk thou interlacest  
     Art the verdure which embracest,  
 And the weight which is its ruin,— 60  
 No more, with green embraces, Vine,  
     Make me think on what thou lovest,—  
 For whilst thus thy boughs entwine,  
     I fear lest thou shouldst teach me, sophist,  
 How arms might be entangled too. 65

Light-enchanted Sunflower, thou  
 Who gazest ever true and tender  
 On the sun's revolving splendour!  
 Follow not his faithless glance  
 With thy faded countenance, 70  
 Nor teach my beating heart to fear,  
 If leaves can mourn without a tear,  
 How eyes must weep! O Nightingale,  
 Cease from thy enamoured tale,—  
 Leafy Vine, unwreath thy bower, 75  
     Restless Sunflower, cease to move,—  
 Or tell me all, what poisonous Power  
     Ye use against me—

*All.*

Love! Love! Love!

*Justina.* It cannot be!—Whom have I ever loved?  
 Trophies of my oblivion and disdain, 80  
 Floro and Lelio did I not reject?  
 And Cyprian?— [*She becomes troubled at the name of Cyprian.*  
     Did I not requite him  
 With such severity, that he has fled  
 Where none has ever heard of him again?—  
 Alas! I now begin to fear that this 85  
 May be the occasion whence desire grows bold,  
 As if there were no danger. From the moment  
 That I pronounced to my own listening heart,  
 'Cyprian is absent!'—O me miserable!  
 I know not what I feel! [*More calmly.*] It must be pity 90  
 To think that such a man, whom all the world  
 Admired, should be forgot by all the world,



And I the cause.

[*She again becomes troubled.*]

And yet if it were pity,  
 Floro and Lelio might have equal share,  
 For they are both imprisoned for my sake. 95  
 (*Calmly.*) Alas! what reasonings are these? it is  
 Enough I pity him, and that, in vain,  
 Without this ceremonious subtlety.  
 And, woe is me! I know not where to find him now,  
 Even should I seek him through this wide world. 100

*Enter DAEMON.*

*Daemon.* Follow, and I will lead thee where he is.

*Justina.* And who art thou, who hast found entrance hither,  
 Into my chamber through the doors and locks?  
 Art thou a monstrous shadow which my madness  
 Has formed in the idle air?

*Daemon.* No, I am one 105  
 Called by the Thought which tyrannizes thee  
 From his eternal dwelling; who this day  
 Is pledged to bear thee unto Cyprian.

*Justina.* So shall thy promise fail. This agony  
 Of passion which afflicts my heart and soul 110  
 May sweep imagination in its storm;  
 The will is firm.

*Daemon.* Already half is done  
 In the imagination of an act.  
 The sin incurred, the pleasure then remains;  
 Let not the will stop half-way on the road. 115

*Justina.* I will not be discouraged, nor despair,  
 Although I thought it, and although 'tis true  
 That thought is but a prelude to the deed:—  
 Thought is not in my power, but action is:  
 I will not move my foot to follow thee. 120

*Daemon.* But a far mightier wisdom than thine own  
 Exerts itself within thee, with such power  
 Compelling thee to that which it inclines  
 That it shall force thy step; how wilt thou then  
 Resist, Justina?

*Justina.* By my free-will.

*Daemon.* I 125  
 Must force thy will.

*Justina.* It is invincible;  
 It were not free if thou hadst power upon it.

[*He draws, but cannot move her.*]

*Daemon.* Come, where a pleasure waits thee.

*Justina.* It were bought  
 Too dear.

*Daemon.* 'Twill soothe thy heart to softest peace.

*Justina.* 'Tis dread captivity.

*Daemon.* 'Tis joy, 'tis glory. 130

*Justina.* 'Tis shame, 'tis torment, 'tis despair.

*Daemon.* But how

Canst thou defend thyself from that or me,

If my power drags thee onward?

*Justina.* My defence

Consists in God.

[*He vainly endeavours to force her, and at last releases her.*

*Daemon.* Woman, thou hast subdued me,

Only by not owning thyself subdued. 135

But since thou thus findest defence in God,

I will assume a feignèd form, and thus

Make thee a victim of my baffled rage.

For I will mask a spirit in thy form

Who will betray thy name to infamy, 140

And doubly shall I triumph in thy loss,

First by dishonouring thee, and then by turning

False pleasure to true ignominy. [*Exit.*

*Justina.* I

Appeal to Heaven against thee; so that Heaven

May scatter thy delusions, and the blot 145

Upon my fame vanish in idle thought,

Even as flame dies in the envious air,

And as the floweret wanes at morning frost;

And thou shouldst never—But, alas! to whom

Do I still speak?—Did not a man but now 150

Stand here before me?—No, I am alone,

And yet I saw him. Is he gone so quickly?

Or can the heated mind engender shapes

From its own fear? Some terrible and strange

Peril is near. Lisander! father! lord! 155

Livia!—

*Enter LISANDER and LIVIA.*

*Lisander.* Oh, my daughter! What?

*Livia.* What!

*Justina.* Saw you

A man go forth from my apartment now?—

I scarce contain myself!

*Lisander.* A man here!

*Justina.* Have you not seen him?

*Livia.* No, Lady.

*Justina.* I saw him.

*Lisander.* 'Tis impossible; the doors 160

Which led to this apartment were all locked.

*Livia (aside).* I daresay it was Moscon whom she saw,  
For he was locked up in my room.

*Lisander.* It must  
Have been some image of thy fantasy.  
Such melancholy as thou feedest is 165  
Skilful in forming such in the vain air  
Out of the motes and atoms of the day.

*Livia.* My master's in the right.

*Justina.* Oh, would it were  
Delusion; but I fear some greater ill.  
I feel as if out of my bleeding bosom 170  
My heart was torn in fragments; ay,  
Some mortal spell is wrought against my frame;  
So potent was the charm that, had not God  
Shielded my humble innocence from wrong,  
I should have sought my sorrow and my shame 175  
With willing steps.—*Livia*, quick, bring my cloak,  
For I must seek refuge from these extremes  
Even in the temple of the highest God  
Where secretly the faithful worship.

*Livia.* Here.

*Justina (putting on her cloak).* In this, as in a shroud of snow, may I  
Quench the consuming fire in which I burn, 181  
Wasting away!

*Lisander.* And I will go with thee.

*Livia.* When I once see them safe out of the house  
I shall breathe freely.

*Justina.* So do I confide  
In thy just favour, Heaven!

*Lisander.* Let us go. 185

*Justina.* Thine is the cause, great God! turn for my sake,  
And for Thine own, mercifully to me!

## STANZAS FROM CALDERON'S CISMA DE INGLATERRA

### I

HAST thou not seen, officious with delight,  
Move through the illumined air about the flower  
The Bee, that fears to drink its purple light,  
Lest danger lurk within that Rose's bower?  
Hast thou not marked the moth's enamoured flight 5  
About the Taper's flame at evening hour,  
Till kindle in that monumental fire  
*His sunflower wings their own funereal pyre?*

## II

My heart, its wishes trembling to unfold,  
 Thus round the Rose and Taper hovering came, 10  
*And Passion's slave, Distrust, in ashes cold,*  
*Smothered awhile, but could not quench the flame,—*  
 Till Love, that grows by disappointment bold,  
 And Opportunity, had conquered Shame;  
 And like the Bee and Moth, in act to close, 15  
*I burned my wings, and settled on the Rose.*

## SCENES FROM THE FAUST OF GOETHE

SCENE I.—PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN. *The Lord and the Host of*  
 HEAVEN.

*Enter three ARCHANGELS.*

*Raphael.*

THE sun makes music as of old  
 Amid the rival spheres of Heaven,  
 On its predestined circle rolled  
 With thunder speed: the Angels even 5  
 Draw strength from gazing on its glance,  
 Though none its meaning fathom may:—  
 The world's unwithered countenance  
 Is bright as at Creation's day.

*Gabriel.*

And swift and swift, with rapid lightness,  
 The adorned Earth spins silently, 10  
 Alternating Elysian brightness  
 With deep and dreadful night; the sea  
 Foams in broad billows from the deep  
 Up to the rocks, and rocks and Ocean,  
 Onward, with spheres which never sleep, 15  
 Are hurried in eternal motion.

*Michael.*

And tempests in contention roar  
 From land to sea, from sea to land;  
 And, raging, weave a chain of power,  
 Which girds the earth, as with a band.— 20  
 A flashing desolation there,  
 Flames before the thunder's way;  
 But Thy servants, Lord, revere  
 The gentle changes of Thy day.

*Chorus of the Three.*

The Angels draw strength from Thy glance, 25  
 Though no one comprehend Thee may;—  
 Thy world's unwithered countenance  
 Is bright as on Creation's day.<sup>1</sup>

*Enter MEPHISTOPHELES.*

*Mephistopheles.* As thou, O Lord, once more art kind enough  
 To interest Thyself in our affairs, 30  
 And ask, 'How goes it with you there below?'  
 And as indulgently at other times  
 Thou tookest not my visits in ill part,  
 Thou seest me here once more among Thy household.  
 Though I should scandalize this company, 35  
 You will excuse me if I do not talk  
 In the high style which they think fashionable;  
 My pathos certainly would make You laugh too,  
 Had You not long since given over laughing.  
 Nothing know I to say of suns and worlds; 40  
 I observe only how men plague themselves;—

<sup>1</sup> *Raphael.* The sun sounds, according to ancient custom,  
 In the song of emulation of his brother-spheres.  
 And its fore-written circle  
 Fulfils with a step of thunder.  
 Its countenance gives the Angels strength  
 Though no one can fathom it.  
 The incredible high works  
 Are excellent as at the first day.

*Gabriel.* And swift, and inconceivably swift  
 The adornment of earth winds itself round,  
 And exchanges Paradise-clearness  
 With deep dreadful night.  
 The sea foams in broad waves  
 From its deep bottom, up to the rocks,  
 And rocks and sea are torn on together  
 In the eternal swift course of the spheres.

*Michael.* And storms roar in emulation  
 From sea to land, from land to sea,  
 And make, raging, a chain  
 Of deepest operation round about.  
 There flames a flashing destruction  
 Before the path of the thunderbolt.  
 But Thy servants, Lord, reverse  
 The gentle alternations of Thy day.

*Chorus.* Thy countenance gives the Angels strength,  
 Though none can comprehend Thee:  
 And all Thy lofty works  
 Are excellent as at the first day.

Such is a literal translation of this astonishing chorus; it is impossible to represent in another language the melody of the versification; even the volatile strength and delicacy of the ideas escape in the crucible of translation, and the reader is surpris'd to find a *caput mortuum*.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

The little god o' the world keeps the same stamp,  
 As wonderful as on creation's day:—  
 A little better would he live, hadst Thou  
 Not given him a glimpse of Heaven's light 45  
 Which he calls reason, and employs it only  
 To live more beastlily than any beast.  
 With reverence to Your Lordship be it spoken,  
 He's like one of those long-legged grasshoppers,  
 Who flits and jumps about, and sings for ever 50  
 The same old song i' the grass. There let him lie,  
 Burying his nose in every heap of dung.

*The Lord.* Have you no more to say? Do you come here  
 Always to scold, and cavil, and complain?  
 Seems nothing ever right to you on earth? 55

*Mephistopheles.* No, Lord! I find all there, as ever, bad at best.  
 Even I am sorry for man's days of sorrow;  
 I could myself almost give up the pleasure  
 Of plaguing the poor things.

*The Lord.* Knowest thou Faust?

*Mephistopheles.* The Doctor?

*The Lord.* Ay; My servant Faust.

*Mephistopheles.* In truth 60

He serves You in a fashion quite his own;  
 And the fool's meat and drink are not of earth.  
 His aspirations bear him on so far  
 That he is half aware of his own folly,  
 For he demands from Heaven its fairest star, 65  
 And from the earth the highest joy it bears,  
 Yet all things far, and all things near, are vain  
 To calm the deep emotions of his breast.

*The Lord.* Though he now serves Me in a cloud of error,  
 I will soon lead him forth to the clear day. 70  
 When trees look green, full well the gardener knows  
 That fruits and blooms will deck the coming year.

*Mephistopheles.* What will You bet?—now I am sure of winning—  
 Only, observe You give me full permission  
 To lead him softly on my path.

*The Lord.* As long 75

As he shall live upon the earth, so long  
 Is nothing unto thee forbidden—Man  
 Must err till he has ceased to struggle.

*Mephistopheles.* Thanks.

And that is all I ask; for willingly  
 I never make acquaintance with the dead. 80  
 The full fresh cheeks of youth are food for me,  
 And if a corpse knocks, I am not at home.  
 For I am like a cat—I like to play

A little with the mouse before I eat it.

*The Lord.* Well, well! it is permitted thee. Draw thou 85  
His spirit from its springs; as thou find'st power,  
Seize him and lead him on thy downward path;  
And stand ashamed when failure teaches thee  
That a good man, even in his darkest longings,  
Is well aware of the right way.

*Mephistopheles.* Well and good. 90  
I am not in much doubt about my bet,  
And if I lose, then 'tis Your turn to crow;  
Enjoy Your triumph then with a full breast.  
Ay; dust shall he devour, and that with pleasure,  
Like my old paramour, the famous Snake. 95

*The Lord.* Pray come here when it suits you; for I never  
Had much dislike for people of your sort.  
And, among all the Spirits who rebelled,  
The knave was ever the least tedious to Me.  
The active spirit of man soon sleeps, and soon 100  
He seeks unbroken quiet; therefore I  
Have given him the Devil for a companion,  
Who may provoke him to some sort of work,  
And must create forever.—But ye, pure  
Children of God, enjoy eternal beauty;— 105  
Let that which ever operates and lives  
Clasp you within the limits of its love;  
And seize with sweet and melancholy thoughts  
The floating phantoms of its loveliness.

[*Heaven closes; the Archangels exeunt.*]

*Mephistopheles.* From time to time I visit the old fellow,  
And I take care to keep on good terms with Him. 111  
Civil enough is the same God Almighty,  
To talk so freely with the Devil himself.

SCENE II.—MAY-DAY NIGHT. *The Hartz Mountain, a desolate Country.* FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES.

*Mephistopheles.* Would you not like a broomstick? As for me  
I wish I had a good stout ram to ride;  
For we are still far from the appointed place.

*Faust.* This knotted staff is help enough for me, 5  
Whilst I feel fresh upon my legs. What good  
Is there in making short a pleasant way?  
To creep along the labyrinths of the vales,  
And climb those rocks, where ever-babbling springs,  
Precipitate themselves in waterfalls, 10  
Is the true sport that seasons such a path.  
Already Spring kindles the birchen spray,  
And the hoar pines already feel her breath:

Shall she not work also within our limbs?

*Mephistopheles.* Nothing of such an influence do I feel.

My body is all wintry, and I wish 15

The flowers upon our path were frost and snow.

But see how melancholy rises now,

Dimly uplifting her belated beam,

The blank unwelcome round of the red moon,

And gives so bad a light, that every step 20

One stumbles 'gainst some crag. With your permission,

I'll call an Ignis-fatuus to our aid:

I see one yonder burning jollily.

Halloo, my friend! may I request that you

Would favour us with your bright company? 25

Why should you blaze away there to no purpose?

Pray be so good as light us up this way.

*Ignis-fatuus.* With reverence be it spoken, I will try

To overcome the lightness of my nature;

Our course, you know, is generally zigzag. 30

*Mephistopheles.* Ha, ha! your worship thinks you have to deal

With men. Go straight on, in the Devil's name,

Or I shall puff your flickering life out.

*Ignis-fatuus.*

Well,

I see you are the master of the house;

I will accommodate myself to you. 35

Only consider that to-night this mountain

Is all enchanted, and if Jack-a-lantern

Shows you his way, though you should miss your own,

You ought not to be too exact with him.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, and IGNIS-FATUUS, in *alternate Chorus.*

The limits of the sphere of dream, 40

The bounds of true and false, are past.

Lead us on, thou wandering Gleam,

Lead us onward, far and fast,

To the wide, the desert waste.

But see, how swift advance and shift 45

Trees behind trees, row by row,—

How, clift by clift, rocks bend and lift

Their frowning foreheads as we go.

The giant-snouted crags, ho! ho!

How they snort, and how they blow! 50

Through the mossy sods and stones,

Stream and streamlet hurry down—

A rushing throng! A sound of song

Beneath the vault of Heaven is blown!

Sweet notes of love, the speaking tones 55



Of this bright day, sent down to say  
That Paradise on Earth is known,  
Resound around, beneath, above.

All we hope and all we love  
Finds a voice in this blithe strain, 60

Which wakens hill and wood and rill,  
And vibrates far o'er field and vale,  
And which Echo, like the tale  
Of old times, repeats again.

To-whoo! to-whoo! near, nearer now 65  
The sound of song, the rushing throng!  
Are the screech, the lapwing, and the jay,  
All awake as if 'twere day?

See, with long legs and belly wide,  
A salamander in the brake! 70

Every root is like a snake,  
And along the loose hillside,  
With strange contortions through the night,  
Curls, to seize or to affright; 75

And, animated, strong, and many,  
They dart forth polypus-antennae,  
To blister with their poison spume  
The wanderer. Through the dazzling gloom  
The many-coloured mice, that thread 80  
The dewy turf beneath our tread,  
In troops each other's motions cross,  
Through the heath and through the moss;  
And, in legions intertangled,

The fire-flies flit, and swarm, and throng,  
Till all the mountain depths are spangled. 85

Tell me, shall we go or stay?  
Shall we onward? Come along!

Everything around is swept  
Forward, onward, far away!  
Trees and masses intercept 90  
The sight, and wisps on every side  
Are puffed up and multiplied.

*Mephistopheles.* Now vigorously seize my skirt, and gain  
This pinnacle of isolated crag.  
One may observe with wonder from this point, 95  
How Mammon glows among the mountains.

*Faust.*

Ay—

And strangely through the solid depth below  
A melancholy light, like the red dawn,  
Shoots from the lowest gorge of the abyss  
Of mountains, lightning hitherward. there rise 100

Pillars of smoke, here clouds float gently by;  
 Here the light burns soft as the enkindled air,  
 Or the illumined dust of golden flowers;  
 And now it glides like tender colours spreading;  
 And now bursts forth in fountains from the earth; 105  
 And now it winds, one torrent of broad light,  
 Through the far valley with a hundred veins;  
 And now once more within that narrow corner  
 Masses itself into intensest splendour.  
 And near us, see, sparks spring out of the ground, 110  
 Like golden sand scattered upon the darkness;  
 The pinnacles of that black wall of mountains  
 That hems us in are kindled.

*Mephistopheles.* Rare: in faith!  
 Does not Sir Mammon gloriously illuminate  
 His palace for this festival?—it is 115  
 A pleasure which you had not known before.  
 I spy the boisterous guests already.

*Faust.* How  
 The children of the wind rage in the air!  
 With what fierce strokes they fall upon my neck!

*Mephistopheles.*  
 Cling tightly to the old ribs of the crag. 120  
 Beware! for if with them thou warrest  
 In their fierce flight towards the wilderness,  
 Their breath will sweep thee into dust, and drag  
 Thy body to a grave in the abyss.  
 A cloud thickens the night. 125  
 Hark! how the tempest crashes through the forest!  
 The owls fly out in strange affright;  
 The columns of the evergreen palaces  
 Are split and shattered;  
 The roots creak, and stretch, and groan; 130  
 And ruinously overthrown,  
 The trunks are crushed and shattered  
 By the fierce blast's unconquerable stress.  
 Over each other crack and crash they all  
 In terrible and intertangled fall; 135  
 And through the ruins of the shaken mountain  
 The airs hiss and howl—  
 It is not the voice of the fountain,  
 Nor the wolf in his midnight prowl.  
 Dost thou not hear? 140  
 Strange accents are ringing  
 Aloft, afar, anear?  
 The witches are singing!

The torrent of a raging wizard song  
Streams the whole mountain along. 145

*Chorus of Witches.*

The stubble is yellow, the corn is green,  
Now to the Brocken the witches go;  
The mighty multitude here may be seen  
Gathering, wizard and witch, below.  
Sir Urian is sitting aloft in the air; 150  
Hey over stock! and hey over stone!  
'Twixt witches and incubi, what shall be done?  
Tell it who dare! tell it who dare!

*A Voice.*

Upon a sow-swine, whose farrows were nine,  
Old Baubo rideth alone. 155

*Chorus.*

Honour her, to whom honour is due,  
Old mother Baubo, honour to you!  
An able sow, with old Baubo upon her,  
Is worthy of glory, and worthy of honour!  
The legion of witches is coming behind, 160  
Darkening the night, and outspeeding the wind—

*A Voice.*

Which way comest thou?

*A Voice.*

Over Ilsenstein;  
The owl was awake in the white moonshine;  
I saw her at rest in her downy nest,  
And she stared at me with her broad, bright eyne. 165

*Voices.*

And you may now as well take your course on to Hell,  
Since you ride by so fast on the headlong blast.

*A Voice.*

She dropped poison upon me as I passed.  
Here are the wounds——

*Chorus of Witches.*

Come away! come along!  
The way is wide, the way is long, 170  
But what is that for a Bedlam throng?  
Stick with the prong, and scratch with the broom.

## S H E L L E Y

The child in the cradle lies strangled at home,  
And the mother is clapping her hands.—

*Semichorus of Wizards I.*

We glide in

Like snails when the women are all away; 175  
And from a house once given over to sin  
Woman has a thousand steps to stray.

*Semichorus II.*

A thousand steps must a woman take,  
Where a man but a single spring will make.

*Voices above.*

Come with us, come with us, from Felsensee. 180

*Voices below.*

With what joy would we fly through the upper sky!  
We are washed, we are 'nointed, stark naked are we;  
But our toil and our pain are forever in vain.

*Both Choruses.*

The wind is still, the stars are fled,  
The melancholy moon is dead; 185  
The magic notes, like spark on spark,  
Drizzle, whistling through the dark.  
Come away!

*Voices below.*

Stay, Oh, stay!

*Voices above.*

Out of the crannies of the rocks 190  
Who calls?

*Voices below.*

Oh, let me join your flocks!  
I, three hundred years have striven  
To catch your skirt and mount to Heaven,—  
And still in vain. Oh, might I be  
With company akin to me! 195

*Both Choruses.*

Some on a ram and some on a prong,  
On poles and on broomsticks we flutter along;  
Forlorn is the wight who can rise not to-night.

*A Half-Witch below.*

I have been tripping this many an hour:  
 Are the others already so far before? 200  
 No quiet at home, and no peace abroad!  
 And less methinks is found by the road.

*Chorus of Witches.*

Come onward, away! aroint thee, aroint!  
 A witch to be strong must anoint—anoint— 205  
 Then every trough will be boat enough;  
 With a rag for a sail we can sweep through the sky,  
 Who flies not to-night, when means he to fly?

*Both Choruses.*

We cling to the skirt, and we strike on the ground;  
 Witch-legions thicken around and around;  
 Wizard-swarms cover the heath all over. [They descend.

*Mephistopheles.*

What thronging, dashing, raging, rustling; 211  
 What whispering, babbling, hissing, bustling;  
 What glimmering, spurting, stinking, burning,  
 As Heaven and Earth were overturning.  
 There is a true witch element about us; 215  
 Take hold on me, or we shall be divided:—  
 Where are you?

*Faust (from a distance).* Here!

*Mephistopheles.*

What!

I must exert my authority in the house.  
 Place for young Voland! pray make way, good people.  
 Take hold on me, doctor, and with one step 220  
 Let us escape from this unpleasant crowd:  
 They are too mad for people of my sort.  
 Just there shines a peculiar kind of light—  
 Something attracts me in those bushes. Come  
 This way: we shall slip down there in a minute. 225

*Faust.* Spirit of Contradiction! Well, lead on—

'Twere a wise feat indeed to wander out  
 Into the Brocken upon May-day night,  
 And then to isolate oneself in scorn,  
 Disgusted with the humours of the time. 230

*Mephistopheles.* See yonder, round a many-coloured flame  
 A merry club is huddled altogether:  
 Even with such little people as sit there  
 One would not be alone.

*Faust.*

Would that I were

Up yonder in the glow and whirling smoke,  
Where the blind million rush impetuously  
To meet the evil ones; there might I solve  
Many a riddle that torments me! 235

*Mephistopheles.* Yet

Many a riddle there is tied anew  
Inextricably. Let the great world rage!  
We will stay here safe in the quiet dwellings. 240  
'Tis an old custom. Men have ever built  
Their own small world in the great world of all.

I see young witches naked there, and old ones  
Wisely attired with greater decency. 245

Be guided now by me, and you shall buy  
A pound of pleasure with a dram of trouble.  
I hear them tune their instruments—one must  
Get used to this damned scraping. Come, I'll lead you  
Among them; and what there you do and see, 250  
As a fresh compact 'twixt us two shall be.

How say you now? this space is wide enough—  
Look forth, you cannot see the end of it—  
An hundred bonfires burn in rows, and they  
Who throng around them seem innumerable: 255  
Dancing and drinking, jabbering, making love,  
And cooking, are at work. Now tell me, friend,  
What is there better in the world than this?

*Faust.* In introducing us, do you assume  
The character of Wizard or of Devil? 260

*Mephistopheles.* In truth, I generally go about  
In strict incognito; and yet one likes  
To wear one's orders upon gala days.  
I have no ribbon at my knee; but here  
At home, the cloven foot is honourable. 265

See you that snail there?—she comes creeping up,  
And with her feeling eyes hath smelt out something.  
I could not, if I would, mask myself here.  
Come now, we'll go about from fire to fire:  
I'll be the Pimp, and you shall be the Lover. 270

[*To some old Women, who are sitting round a heap of glimmering coals.*  
Old gentlewomen, what do you do out here?  
You ought to be with the young rioters  
Right in the thickest of the revelry—  
But every one is best content at home.

*General.*

Who dare confide in right or a just claim? 275  
So much as I had done for them! and now—  
With women and the people 'tis the same,

Youth will stand foremost ever,—age may go  
To the dark grave unhonoured.

*Minister.*

Nowadays

People assert their rights: they go too far; 280  
But as for me, the good old times I praise;  
Then we were all in all—'twas something worth  
One's while to be in place and wear a star;  
That was indeed the golden age on earth.

*Parvenu.*

We too are active, and we did and do 285  
What we ought not, perhaps; and yet we now  
Will seize, whilst all things are whirled round and round,  
A spoke of Fortune's wheel, and keep our ground.

*Author.*

Who now can taste a treatise of deep sense  
And ponderous volume? 'tis impertinence 290  
To write what none will read, therefore will I  
To please the young and thoughtless people try.

*Mephistopheles (who at once appears to have grown very old).* I  
find the people ripe for the last day,  
Since I last came up to the wizard mountain;  
And as my little cask runs turbid now, 295  
So is the world drained to the dregs.

*Pedlar-witch.*

Look here,

Gentlemen; do not hurry on so fast;  
And lose the chance of a good pennyworth.  
I have a pack full of the choicest wares  
Of every sort, and yet in all my bundle 300  
Is nothing like what may be found on earth;  
Nothing that in a moment will make rich  
Men and the world with fine malicious mischief—  
There is no dagger drunk with blood; no bowl  
From which consuming poison may be drained 305  
By innocent and healthy lips; no jewel,  
The price of an abandoned maiden's shame;  
No sword which cuts the bond it cannot loose,  
Or stabs the wearer's enemy in the back;  
No——

*Mephistopheles.* Gossip, you know little of these times. 310  
What has been, has been; what is done, is past,  
They shape themselves into the innovations  
They breed, and innovation drags us with it.  
The torrent of the crowd sweeps over us:  
You think to impel, and are yourself impelled. 315

*Faust.* What is that yonder?

*Mephistopheles.* Mark her well. It is  
Lilith.

*Faust.* Who?

*Mephistopheles.* Lilith, the first wife of Adam.  
Beware of her fair hair, for she excels  
All women in the magic of her locks;  
And when she winds them round a young man's neck, 320  
She will not ever set him free again.

*Faust.*

There sit a girl and an old woman—they  
Seem to be tired with pleasure and with play.

*Mephistopheles.*

There is no rest to-night for any one:  
When one dance ends another is begun; 325  
Come, let us to it. We shall have rare fun.  
[*FAUST dances and sings with a girl, and MEPHISTOPHELES with an old Woman.*

*Faust.*

I had once a lovely dream  
In which I saw an apple-tree,  
Where two fair apples with their gleam  
To climb and taste attracted me. 330

*The Girl.*

She with apples you desired  
From Paradise came long ago:  
With you I feel that if required,  
Such still within my garden grow.

*Procto-Phantasmist.* What is this cursèd multitude about?

Have we not long since proved to demonstration 336  
That ghosts move not on ordinary feet?  
But these are dancing just like men and women.

*The Girl.* What does he want then at our ball?

*Faust.*

Oh! he

Is far above us all in his conceit: 340  
Whilst we enjoy, he reasons of enjoyment;  
And any step which in our dance we tread,  
If it be left out of his reckoning,  
Is not to be considered as a step.  
There are few things that scandalize him not: 345  
And when you whirl round in the circle now,  
As he went round the wheel in his old mill,  
He says that you go wrong in all respects,  
Especially if you congratulate him



Upon the strength of the resemblance.

*Procto-Phantasmist.*

Fly!

350

Vanish! Unheard-of impudence! What, still there!

In this enlightened age too, since you have been

Proved not to exist!—But this infernal brood

Will hear no reason and endure no rule.

Are we so wise, and is the *pond* still haunted?

355

How long have I been sweeping out this rubbish

Of superstition, and the world will not

Come clean with all my pains!—it is a case

Unheard of!

*The Girl.* Then leave off teasing us so.

*Procto-Phantasmist.* I tell you, spirits, to your faces now,

360

That I should not regret this despotism

Of spirits, but that mine can wield it not.

To-night I shall make poor work of it,

Yet I will take a round with you, and hope

Before my last step in the living dance

365

To beat the poet and the devil together.

*Mephistopheles.* At last he will sit down in some foul puddle;

That is his way of solacing himself;

Until some leech, diverted with his gravity,

Cures him of spirits and the spirit together.

370

[*To FAUST, who has seceded from the dance.*

Why do you let that fair girl pass from you,

Who sung so sweetly to you in the dance?

*Faust.* A red mouse in the middle of her singing

Sprung from her mouth.

*Mephistopheles.*

That was all right, my friend:

Be it enough that the mouse was not gray.

375

Do not disturb your hour of happiness

With close consideration of such trifles.

*Faust.* Then saw I——

*Mephistopheles.*

What?

*Faust.*

Seest thou not a pale,

Fair girl, standing alone, far, far away?

She drags herself now forward with slow steps,

380

And seems as if she moved with shackled feet:

I cannot overcome the thought that she

Is like poor Margaret.

*Mephistopheles.*

Let it be—pass on—

No good can come of it—it is not well

To meet it—it is an enchanted phantom,

385

A lifeless idol; with its numbing look,

It freezes up the blood of man; and they

Who meet its ghastly stare are turned to stone,

Like those who saw Medusa.

- Faust.* Oh, too true!  
 Her eyes are like the eyes of a fresh corpse 390  
 Which no belovèd hand has closed, alas!  
 That is the breast which Margaret yielded to me—  
 Those are the lovely limbs which I enjoyed!  
*Mephistopheles.* It is all magic, poor deluded fool!  
 She looks to every one like his first love. 395  
*Faust.* Oh, what delight! what woe! I cannot turn  
 My looks from her sweet piteous countenance.  
 How strangely does a single blood-red line,  
 Not broader than the sharp edge of a knife,  
 Adorn her lovely neck!  
*Mephistopheles.* Ay, she can carry 400  
 Her head under her arm upon occasion;  
 Perseus has cut it off for her. These pleasures  
 End in delusion.—Gain this rising ground,  
 It is as airy here as in a . . .  
 And if I am not mightily deceived, 405  
 I see a theatre.—What may this mean?  
*Attendant.* Quite a new piece, the last of seven, for 'tis  
 The custom now to represent that number.  
 'Tis written by a Dilettante, and  
 The actors who perform are Dilettanti; 410  
 Excuse me, gentlemen; but I must vanish.  
 I am a Dilettante curtain-lifter.

## JUVENILIA

### QUEEN MAB

#### A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM, WITH NOTES

ECRASEZ L'INFAME!—*Correspondance de Voltaire.*

Avia Pieridum poragro loca, nullius ante

Trita solo; juvat integros accedere fonteis;

Atque haurire: juvatque novos decerpere flores.

Unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae.

Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus; et arctis

Religionum animos nodis exsolvere pergo.—*Lucret. lib. iv.*

Δος πω στω, καὶ κοσμον κινήσω.—*Archimedes.*

#### TO HARRIET \* \* \* \* \*

|                                                       |                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| WHOSE is the love that gleaming<br>through the world, | Virtue's most sweet reward?                     |
| Wards off the poisonous arrow of<br>its scorn?        | Beneath whose looks did my reviv-<br>ing soul 5 |
| Whose is the warm and partial<br>praise,              | Riper in truth and virtuous daring<br>grow?     |

Whose eyes have I gazed fondly  
on,  
And loved mankind the more?

HARRIET! on thine:—thou wert  
my purer mind;  
Thou wert the inspiration of my  
song; 10  
Thine are these early wilding  
flowers,  
Though garlanded by me.

Then press into thy breast this  
pledge of love;  
And know, though time may change  
and years may roll,  
Each floweret gathered in my  
heart 15  
It consecrates to thine.

QUEEN MAB

I

How wonderful is Death,  
Death and his brother Sleep!  
One, pale as yonder waning  
moon  
With lips of lurid blue;  
The other, rosy as the morn 5  
When throned on ocean's wave  
It blushes o'er the world:  
Yet both so passing wonderful!

Hath then the gloomy Power  
Whose reign is in the tainted sepul-  
chres 10  
Seized on her sinless soul?  
Must then that peerless form  
Which love and admiration cannot  
view  
Without a beating heart, those  
azure veins  
Which steal like streams along a  
field of snow, 15  
That lovely outline, which is fair  
As breathing marble, perish?  
Must putrefaction's breath  
Leave nothing of this heavenly  
sight

But loathsomeness and ruin?  
Spare nothing but a gloomy  
theme, 21  
On which the lightest heart might  
moralize?  
Or is it only a sweet slumber  
Stealing o'er sensation,  
Which the breath of roseate  
morning 25  
Chaseth into darkness?  
Will Ianthe wake again,  
And give that faithful bosom joy  
Whose sleepless spirit waits to  
catch  
Light, life and rapture from her  
smile? 30

Yes! she will wake again,  
Although her glowing limbs are  
motionless,  
And silent those sweet lips,  
Once breathing eloquence,  
That might have soothed a  
tiger's rage, 35  
Or thawed the cold heart of a  
conqueror.  
Her dewy eyes are closed,  
And on their lids, whose texture  
fine  
Scarce hides the dark blue orbs  
beneath,  
The baby Sleep is pillowed: 40  
Her golden tresses shade  
The bosom's stainless pride,  
Curling like tendrils of the para-  
site  
Around a marble column.  
Hark! whence that rushing  
sound?  
'Tis like the wondrous strain 46  
That round a lonely ruin swells,  
Which, wandering on the echo-  
ing shore,  
The enthusiast hears at eve-  
ning:  
'Tis softer than the west wind's  
sigh; 50

'Tis wilder than the unmeasured  
 notes  
 Of that strange lyre whose strings  
 The genii of the breezes sweep:  
 Those lines of rainbow light  
 Are like the moonbeams when  
 they fall 55  
 Through some cathedral window,  
 but the tints  
 Are such as may not find  
 Comparison on earth.  
 Behold the chariot of the Fairy  
 Queen!  
 Celestial coursers paw the unyield-  
 ing air; 60  
 Their filmy pennons at her word  
 they furl,  
 And stop obedient to the reins of  
 light:  
 These the Queen of Spells drew  
 in,  
 She spread a charm around the  
 spot,  
 And leaning graceful from the  
 aethereal car, 65  
 Long did she gaze, and silently,  
 Upon the slumbering maid.  
 Oh! not the visioned poet in his  
 dreams,  
 When silvery clouds float through  
 the 'wildered brain,  
 When every sight of lovely, wild  
 and grand 70  
 Astonishes, enraptures, elevates,  
 When fancy at a glance com-  
 bines  
 The wondrous and the beauti-  
 ful,—  
 So bright, so fair, so wild a  
 shape  
 Hath ever yet beheld, 75  
 As that which reined the coursers  
 of the air,  
 And poured the magic of her  
 gaze  
 Upon the maiden's sleep.

The broad and yellow moon  
 Shone dimly through her  
 form— 80  
 That form of faultless sym-  
 metry;  
 The pearly and pellucid car  
 Moved not the moonlight's  
 line:  
 'Twas not an earthly pageant:  
 Those who had looked upon the  
 sight, 85  
 Passing all human glory,  
 Saw not the yellow moon,  
 Saw not the mortal scene,  
 Heard not the night-wind's  
 rush,  
 Heard not an earthly sound, 90  
 Saw but the fairy pageant,  
 Heard but the heavenly  
 strains  
 That filled the lonely dwelling  
 The Fairy's frame was slight,  
 yon fibrous cloud,  
 That catches but the palest  
 tinge of even, 95  
 And which the straining eye can  
 hardly seize  
 When melting into eastern twi-  
 light's shadow,  
 Were scarce so thin, so slight;  
 But the fair star  
 That gems the glittering coronet  
 of morn,  
 Sheds not a light so mild, so pow-  
 erful, 100  
 As that which, bursting from the  
 Fairy's form,  
 Spread a purpureal halo round  
 the scene,  
 Yet with an undulating mo-  
 tion,  
 Swayed to her outline grace-  
 fully.  
 From her celestial car 105  
 The Fairy Queen descended,  
 And thrice she waved her  
 wand

Circled with wreaths of  
amaranth:

Her thin and misty form 109  
Moved with the moving air,  
And the clear silver tones,  
As thus she spoke, were such  
As are unheard by all but gifted  
ear.

*Fairy.*

'Stars! your balmiest influ-  
ence shed! 114

Elements! your wrath sus-  
pend!

Sleep, Ocean, in the rocky  
bounds

That circle thy domain!

Let not a breath be seen to stir  
Around yon grass-grown ruin's  
height, 119

Let even the restless gossamer  
Sleep on the moveless air!

Soul of Ianthe! thou,

Judged alone worthy of the envied  
boon,

That waits the good and the sin-  
cere; that waits

Those who have struggled, and  
with resolute will 125

Vanquished earth's pride and mean-  
ness, burst the chains,

The icy chains of custom, and have  
shone

The day-stars of their age;—Soul  
of Ianthe!

Awake! arise!

Sudden arose 130

Ianthe's Soul; it stood

All beautiful in naked purity,

The perfect semblance of its bodily  
frame.

Instinct with inexpressible beauty  
and grace,

Each stain of earthliness 135

Had passed away, it reassumed  
Its native dignity, and stood

Immortal amid ruin.

Upon the couch the body lay

Wrapped in the depth of slum-  
ber: 141

Its features were fixed and mean-  
ingless,

Yet animal life was there,  
And every organ yet performed

Its natural functions: 'twas a  
sight

Of wonder to behold the body and  
soul. 145

The self-same lineaments, the  
same

Marks of identity were there:

Yet, oh, how different! One aspires  
to Heaven,

Pants for its sempiternal heritage,  
And ever-changing, ever-rising still.

Wantons in endless being. 151

The other, for a time the unwilling  
sport

Of circumstance and passion, strug-  
gles on;

Fleets through its sad duration  
rapidly:

Then, like an useless and worn-out  
machine, 155

Rots, perishes, and passes.

*Fairy.*

'Spirit! who hast dived so  
deep;

Spirit! who hast soared so  
high;

Thou the fearless, thou the  
mild,

Accept the boon thy worth hath  
earned, 160

Ascend the car with me.'

*Spirit.*

'Do I dream? Is this new feeling  
But a visioned ghost of slumber?

If indeed I am a soul,

A free, a disembodied soul, 163  
Speak again to me.'

*Fairy.*

'I am the Fairy MAB: to me 'tis  
given

The wonders of the human world  
     to keep:  
 The secrets of the immeasurable  
     past,  
 In the unflinching consciences of  
     men,  
 Those stern, unflattering chron-  
     iclers, I find: 171  
 The future, from the causes which  
     arise  
 In each event, I gather: not the  
     sting  
 Which retributive memory im-  
     plants  
 In the hard bosom of the selfish  
     man;  
 Nor that ecstatic and exulting  
     throb  
 Which virtue's votary feels when  
     he sums up 177  
 The thoughts and actions of a well-  
     spent day,  
 Are unforeseen, unregistered by me:  
 And it is yet permitted me, to  
     rend 180  
 The veil of mortal frailty, that the  
     spirit,  
 Clothed in its changeless purity,  
     may know  
 How soonest to accomplish the  
     great end  
 For which it hath its being, and  
     may taste  
 That peace, which in the end all  
     life will share. 185  
 This is the meed of virtue; happy  
     Soul,  
     Ascend the car with me!

The chains of earth's immure-  
     ment  
 Fell from Ianthe's spirit;  
 They shrank and brake like ban-  
     dages of straw 190  
 Beneath a wakened giant's  
     strength.  
 She knew her glorious change,

And felt in apprehension uncon-  
     trolled 193  
 New raptures opening round:  
 Each day-dream of her mortal  
     life,  
 Each frenzied vision of the slum-  
     bers  
 That closed each well-spent  
     day,  
 Seemed now to meet reality.  
 The Fairy and the Soul pro-  
     ceeded;  
 The silver clouds parted;  
 And as the car of magic they as-  
     cended, 201  
 Again the speechless music  
     swelled,  
 Again the coursers of the air  
 Unfurled their azure pennons, and  
     the Queen  
 Shaking the beamy reins 205  
 Bade them pursue their way.  
 The magic car moved on.  
 The night was fair, and countless  
     stars  
 Studded Heaven's dark blue  
     vault,—  
 Just o'er the eastern wave 210  
 Peeped the first faint smile of  
     morn:—  
 The magic car moved on—  
 From the celestial hoofs  
 The atmosphere in flaming sparkles  
     flew,  
 And where the burning wheels  
 Eddied above the mountain's lofti-  
     est peak, 216  
 Was traced a line of lightning.  
 Now it flew far above a rock,  
 The utmost verge of earth,  
 The rival of the Andes, whose  
     dark brow 220  
 Lowered o'er the silver sea.  
 Far, far below the chariot's path,  
 Calm as a slumbering babe,  
 Tremendous Ocean lay.

The mirror of its stillness showed  
The pale and waning stars, 226  
The chariot's fiery track,  
And the gray light of morn  
Tinging those fleecy clouds  
That canopied the dawn, 230

Seemed it, that the chariot's way  
Lay through the midst of an im-  
mense concave,

Radiant with million constella-  
tions, tinged  
With shades of infinite colour,  
And semicircled with a belt 235  
Flashing incessant meteors.

The magic car moved on.

As they approached their goal  
The coursers seemed to gather  
speed;

The sea no longer was distin-  
guished; earth 240

Appeared a vast and shadowy  
sphere;

The sun's unclouded orb  
Rolled through the black con-  
cave;

Its rays of rapid light

Parted around the chariot's swifter  
course, 245

And fell, like ocean's feathery  
spray

Dashed from the boiling surge  
Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on.

Earth's distant orb appeared  
The smallest light that twinkles in  
the heaven; 251

Whilst round the chariot's way  
Innumerable systems rolled,  
And countless spheres diffused  
An ever-varying glory. 255

It was a sight of wonder: some  
Were horned like the crescent  
moon;

Some shed a mild and silver  
beam

Like Hesperus o'er the western  
sea;

Some dashed athwart with trains  
of flame, 260

Like worlds to death and ruin  
driven;

Some shone like suns, and, as the  
chariot passed,  
Eclipsed all other light.

Spirit of Nature! here!

In this interminable wilderness 265  
Of worlds, at whose immensity

Even soaring fancy staggers,  
Here is thy fitting temple.

Yet not the lightest leaf

That quivers to the passing breeze  
Is less instinct with thee: 271

Yet not the meanest worm

That lurks in graves and fattens on  
the dead

Less shares thy eternal breath,  
Spirit of Nature! thou! 275

Imperishable as this scene,  
Here is thy fitting temple.

## II

IF solitude hath ever led thy steps  
To the wild Ocean's echoing  
shore,

And thou hast lingered there,  
Until the sun's broad orb

Seemed resting on the burnished  
wave, 5

Thou must have marked the  
lines

Of purple gold, that motionless  
Hung o'er the sinking sphere:  
Thou must have marked the bil-  
lows clouds

Edged with intolerable radiancy  
Towering like rocks of jet 11  
Crowned with a diamond  
wreath.

And yet there is a moment,  
When the sun's highest point

Peeps like a star o'er Ocean's west-  
ern edge, 15

When those far clouds of feathery  
gold,

Shaded with deepest purple,  
gleam

Like islands on a dark blue sea;  
Then has thy fancy soared above  
the earth,

And furl'd its wearied wing 20  
Within the Fairy's fane.

Yet not the golden islands  
Gleaming in yon flood of light,  
Nor the feathery curtains

Stretching o'er the sun's bright  
couch, 25

Nor the burnished Ocean  
waves

Paving that gorgeous dome,  
So fair, so wonderful a sight

As Mab's aethereal palace could  
afford.

Yet likest evening's vault, that  
faery Hall! 30

As Heaven, low resting on the  
wave, it spread

Its floors of flashing light,  
Its vast and azure dome,

Its fertile golden islands  
Floating on a silver sea; 35

Whilst suns their mingling beam-  
ings darted

Through clouds of circumambient  
darkness,

And pearly battlements around  
Look'd o'er the immense of  
Heaven.

The magic car no longer  
moved.

The Fairy and the Spirit 41  
Entered the Hall of Spells:

Those golden clouds  
That rolled in glittering bil-  
lows

Beneath the azure canopy 45

With the aethereal footsteps trem-  
bled not:

The light and crimson mists,  
Floating to strains of thrilling mel-  
ody

Through that unearthly dwell-  
ing,

Yielded to every movement of the  
will.

Upon their passive swell the Spirit  
leaned, 51

And, for the varied bliss that  
pressed around,

Used not the glorious privilege  
Of virtue and of wisdom.

'Spirit!' the Fairy said, 55  
And pointed to the gorgeous  
dome,

'This is a wondrous sight  
And mocks all human gran-  
deur;

But, were it virtue's only meed, to  
dwell

In a celestial palace, all resigned 60  
To pleasurable impulses, immured  
Within the prison of itself, the will

Of changeless Nature would be un-  
fulfilled.

Learn to make others happy. Spirit,  
come!

This is thine high reward:—the  
past shall rise; 65

Thou shalt behold the present; I  
will teach

The secrets of the future.'

The Fairy and the Spirit  
Approached the overhanging bat-  
tlement.—

Below lay stretched the uni-  
verse!

There, far as the remotest line  
That bounds imagination's  
flight, 72

Countless and unending  
orbs



In mazy motion intermingled,  
 Yet still fulfilled immutably  
 Eternal Nature's law. 76  
 Above, below, around,  
 The circling systems  
 formed  
 A wilderness of harmony;  
 Each with undeviating aim,  
 In eloquent silence, through the  
 depths of space 81  
 Pursued its wondrous way.

There was a little light  
 That twinkled in the misty dis-  
 tance:  
 None but a spirit's eye 85  
 Might ken that rolling orb;  
 None but a spirit's eye  
 And in no other place  
 But that celestial dwelling, might  
 behold  
 Each action of this earth's in-  
 habitants. 90  
 But matter, space and time  
 In those æreal mansions cease to  
 act;  
 And all-prevailing wisdom, when  
 it reaps  
 The harvest of its excellence, o'er-  
 bounds  
 Those obstacles, of which an  
 earthly soul 95  
 Fears to attempt the conquest.

The Fairy pointed to the earth.  
 The Spirit's intellectual eye  
 Its kindred beings recognized.  
 The thronging thousands, to a pass-  
 ing view, 100  
 Seemed like an ant-hill's citi-  
 zens.

How wonderful! that even  
 The passions, prejudices, interests,  
 That sway the meanest being, the  
 weak touch  
 That moves the finest nerve,  
 And in one human brain 106

Causes the faintest thought, be-  
 comes a link  
 In the great chain of Nature.

'Behold,' the Fairy cried,  
 'Palmyra's ruined palaces!— 110  
 Behold! where grandeur  
 frowned;  
 Behold! where pleasure  
 smiled;

What now remains?—the mem-  
 ory  
 Of senselessness and  
 shame—

What is immortal there? 115  
 Nothing—it stands to tell  
 A melancholy tale, to give  
 An awful warning: soon

Oblivion will steal silently  
 The remnant of its fame. 120  
 Monarchs and conquerors  
 there

Proud o'er prostrate millions  
 trod—

The earthquakes of the human  
 race;

Like them, forgotten when the  
 ruin

That marks their shock is  
 past.

'Beside the eternal Nile, 126  
 The Pyramids have risen.  
 Nile shall pursue his changeless  
 way:

Those Pyramids shall fall;  
 Yea! not a stone shall stand to  
 tell 130

The spot whereon they stood!  
 Their very site shall be for-  
 gotten, 132  
 As is their builder's name!

'Behold yon sterile spot;  
 Where now the wandering Arab's  
 tent 135  
 Flaps in the desert-blast.

There once old Salem's haughty  
     fane  
 Reared high to Heaven its thou-  
     sand golden domes,  
 And in the blushing face of day  
     Exposed its shameful glory.  
 Oh! many a widow, many an  
     orphan cursed 141  
 The building of that fane; and  
     many a father,  
 Worn out with toil and slavery,  
     implored  
 The poor man's God to speed it  
     from the earth,  
 And spare his children the detested  
     task 145  
 Of piling stone on stone, and poi-  
     soning  
     The choicest days of life,  
     To soothe a dotard's vanity.  
 There an inhuman and uncultured  
     race  
 Howled hideous praises to their  
     Demon-God; 150  
 They rushed to war, tore from the  
     mother's womb  
 The unborn child,—old age and  
     infancy,  
 Promiscuous perished; their vic-  
     torious arms  
 Left not a soul to breathe. Oh! they  
     were fiends:  
 But what was he who taught them  
     that the God 155  
 Of nature and benevolence hath  
     given  
 A special sanction to the trade of  
     blood?  
 His name and theirs are fading, and  
     the tales  
 Of this barbarian nation, which im-  
     posture  
 Recites till terror credits, are pur-  
     suing 160  
     Itself into forgetfulness.  
 'Where Athens, Rome, and  
     Sparta stood,

There is a moral desert now:  
 The mean and miserable huts,  
 The yet more wretched pal-  
     aces, 165  
 Contrasted with those ancient  
     fanés,  
 Now crumbling to oblivion;  
 The long and lonely colonnades,  
 Through which the ghost of  
     Freedom stalks,  
     Seem like a well-known  
     tune,  
 Which in some dear scene we have  
     loved to hear, 171  
     Remembered now in sad-  
     ness.  
     But, oh! how much more  
     changed,  
     How gloomier is the con-  
     trast  
     Of human nature there! 175  
 Where Socrates expired, a tyrant's  
     slave,  
 A coward and a fool, spreads death  
     around—  
     Then, shuddering, meets his  
     own.  
 Where Cicero and Antoninus  
     lived,  
     A cowed and hypocritical  
     monk 180  
     Prays, curses and deceives.  
  
     'Spirit, ten thousand years  
     Have scarcely passed away,  
 Since, in the waste where now the  
     savage drinks  
 His enemy's blood, and aping Eu-  
     rope's sons, 185  
     Wakes the unholy song of war,  
     Arose a stately city,  
 Metropolis of the western conti-  
     nent:  
     There, now, the mossy column-  
     stone, 189  
 Indented by Time's unrelaxing  
     grasp,

Which once appeared to  
 brave  
 All, save its country's ruin;  
 There the wide forest  
 scene,  
 Rude in the uncultivated loveliness  
 Of gardens long run wild,  
 Seems, to the unwilling sojourner,  
 whose steps 196  
 Chance in that desert has de-  
 layed,  
 Thus to have stood since earth was  
 what it is  
 Yet once it was the busiest  
 haunt,  
 Whither, as to a common centre,  
 flocked 200  
 Strangers, and ships, and mer-  
 chandise:  
 Once peace and freedom  
 blessed  
 The cultivated plain:  
 But wealth, that curse of  
 man,  
 Blighted the bud of its prosperity:  
 Virtue and wisdom, truth and  
 liberty, 206  
 Fled, to return not, until man shall  
 know  
 That they alone can give the  
 bliss  
 Worthy a soul that claims  
 Its kindred with eternity. 210

'There's not one atom of yon  
 earth  
 But once was living man;  
 Nor the minutest drop of rain,  
 That hangeth in its thinnest  
 cloud, 214  
 But flowed in human veins:  
 And from the burning  
 plains  
 Where Libyan monsters  
 yell,  
 From the most gloomy  
 glens

Of Greenland's sunless  
 clime, 219  
 To where the golden fields  
 Of fertile England spread  
 Their harvest to the day,  
 Thou canst not find one spot  
 Whereon no city stood. 224

'How strange is human  
 pride!  
 I tell thee that those living things,  
 To whom the fragile blade of grass,  
 That springeth in the morn  
 And perisheth ere noon,  
 Is an unbounded world; 230  
 I tell thee that those viewless  
 beings,  
 Whose mansion is the smallest  
 particle  
 Of the impassive atmosphere,  
 Think, feel and live like man;  
 That their affections and antipa-  
 thies,  
 Like his, produce the laws 236  
 Ruling their moral state;  
 And the minutest throb  
 That through their frame dif-  
 fuses  
 The slightest, faintest motion,  
 Is fixed and indispensable 241  
 As the majestic laws  
 That rule yon rolling orbs.'

The Fairy paused. The Spirit,  
 In ecstasy of admiration, felt 245  
 All knowledge of the past revived;  
 the events  
 Of old and wondrous times,  
 Which dim tradition interruptedly  
 Teaches the credulous vulgar, were  
 unfolded  
 In just perspective to the view;  
 Yet dim from their infinitude. 251  
 The Spirit seemed to stand  
 High on an isolated pinnacle;  
 The flood of ages combating below,  
 The depth of the unbounded uni-  
 verse

Above, and all around 256  
Nature's unchanging harmony.

## III

'FAIRY!' the Spirit said,  
And on the Queen of Spells  
Fixed her aethereal eyes,  
'I thank thee. Thou hast  
given

A boon which I will not resign,  
and taught 5

A lesson not to be unlearned. I  
know

The past, and thence I will essay  
to glean

A warning for the future, so that  
man

May profit by his errors, and derive  
Experience from his folly: 10

For, when the power of imparting  
joy

Is equal to the will, the human soul  
Requires no other Heaven.'

*Mab.*

'Turn thee, surpassing Spirit!  
Much yet remains unscanned.  
Thou knowest how great is  
man, 16

Thou knowest his imbecility:  
Yet learn thou what he is:

Yet learn the lofty destiny  
Which restless time prepares

For every living soul. 21

'Behold a gorgeous palace, that,  
amid

Yon populous city rears its thou-  
sand towers

And seems itself a city. Gloomy  
troops

Of sentinels, in stern and silent  
ranks,

Encompass it around: the dweller  
there 26

Cannot be free and happy; hearest  
thou not

The curses of the fatherless, the  
groans

Of those who have no friend? He  
passes on:

The King, the wearer of a gilded  
chain

That binds his soul to abjectness,  
the fool 31

Whom courtiers nickname mon-  
arch, whilst a slave

Even to the basest appetites—that  
man

Heeds not the shriek of penury; he  
smiles

At the deep curses which the desti-  
tute 35

Mutter in secret, and a sullen joy  
Pervades his bloodless heart when

thousands groan

But for those morsels which his  
wantonness

Wastes in unjoyous revelry, to save  
All that they love from famine:

when he hears 40

The tale of horror, to some ready-  
made face

Of hypocritical assent he turns,  
Smothering the glow of shame,

that, spite of him,  
Flushes his bloated cheek.

Now to the meal  
Of silence, grandeur, and excess,

he drags 45

His palled unwilling appetite. If  
gold,

Gleaming around, and numerous  
viands culled

From every clime, could force the  
loathing sense

To overcome satiety,—if wealth  
The spring it draws from poisons

not,—or vice, 50

Unfeeling, stubborn vice, convert-  
eth not

Its food to deadliest venom; then  
that king

Is happy; and the peasant who  
fulfils  
His unforced task, when he returns  
at even,  
And by the blazing faggot meets  
again  
Her welcome for whom all his toil  
is sped, 56  
Tastes not a sweeter meal.  
Behold him now  
Stretched on the gorgeous couch;  
his fevered brain  
Reels dizzily awhile: but ah! too  
soon  
The slumber of intemperance sub-  
sides, 60  
And conscience, that undying ser-  
pent, calls  
Her venomous brood to their noc-  
turnal task.  
Listen! he speaks! oh! mark that  
frenzied eye—  
Oh! mark that deadly visage.'

*King.*

'No cessation!  
Oh! must this last for ever? Awful  
Death, 65  
I wish, yet fear to clasp thee!—Not  
one moment  
Of dreamless sleep! O dear and  
blessèd peace!  
Why dost thou shroud thy vestal  
purity  
In penury and dungeons? where-  
fore lurkest  
With danger, death, and solitude;  
yet shunn'st 70  
The palace I have built thee?  
Sacred peace!  
Oh visit me but once, but pitying  
shed  
One drop of balm upon my withered  
soul.'

*The Fairy.*

'Vain man! that palace is the vir-  
tuous heart,

And Peace defileth not her snowy  
robes  
In such a shed as thine. Hark! yet  
he mutters; 76  
His slumbers are but varied ago-  
nies,  
They prey like scorpions on the  
springs of life.  
There needeth not the hell that  
bigots frame  
To punish those who err: earth in  
itself 80  
Contains at once the evil and the  
cure;  
And all-sufficing Nature can chas-  
tise  
Those who transgress her law,—  
she only knows  
How justly to proportion to the  
fault  
The punishment it merits.  
Is it strange 85  
That this poor wretch should pride  
him in his woe?  
Take pleasure in his abjectness,  
and hug  
The scorpion that consumes him?  
Is it strange  
That, placed on a conspicuous  
throne of thorns,  
Grasping an iron sceptre, and im-  
mured 90  
Within a splendid prison, whose  
stern bounds  
Shut him from all that's good or  
dear on earth,  
His soul asserts not its humanity?  
That man's mild nature rises not  
in war  
Against a king's employ? No—'tis  
not strange. 95  
He, like the vulgar, thinks, feels,  
acts and lives  
Just as his father did; the uncon-  
quered powers  
Of precedent and custom inter-  
pose

Between a *king* and virtue. Stranger yet,  
 To those who know not Nature, nor deduce 100  
 The future from the present, it may seem,  
 That not one slave, who suffers from the crimes  
 Of this unnatural being; not one wretch,  
 Whose children famish, and whose nuptial bed  
 Is earth's unpitiful bosom, rears an arm  
 To dash him from his throne! Those gilded flies 106  
 That, basking in the sunshine of a court,  
 Fatten on its corruption!—what are they?  
 —The drones of the community; they feed  
 On the mechanic's labour: the starved hind 110  
 For them compels the stubborn glebe to yield  
 Its unshared harvest; and yon squalid form,  
 Leaner than fleshless misery, that wastes  
 A sunless life in the unwholesome mine,  
 Drags out in labour a protracted death,  
 To glut their grandeur; many faint with toil, 116  
 That few may know the cares and woe of sloth.  
 'Whence, think'st thou, kings and parasites arose?  
 Whence that unnatural line of drones, who heap  
 Toil and unvanquishable penury  
 On those who build their palaces, and bring 121  
 Their daily bread?—From vice, black loathsome vice;

From rapine, madness, treachery, and wrong;  
 From all that 'genders misery, and makes  
 Of earth this thorny wilderness; from lust, 125  
 Revenge, and murder. . . . And when Reason's voice,  
 Loud as the voice of Nature, shall have waked  
 The nations; and mankind perceive that vice  
 Is discord, war, and misery; that virtue  
 Is peace, and happiness and harmony; 130  
 When man's maturer nature shall disdain  
 The playthings of its childhood;—kingly glare  
 Will lose its power to dazzle; its authority  
 Will silently pass by; the gorgeous throne  
 Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall, 135  
 Fast falling to decay; whilst falsehood's trade  
 Shall be as hateful and unprofitable  
 As that of truth is now.  
 Where is the fame  
 Which the vainglorious mighty of the earth  
 Seek to eternize? Oh! the faintest sound 140  
 From Time's light footfall, the minutest wave  
 That swells the flood of ages, whelms in nothing  
 The unsubstantial bubble. Ay! to-day  
 Stern is the tyrant's mandate, red the gaze  
 That flashes desolation, strong the arm 145  
 That scatters multitudes. To-morrow comes!

That mandate is a thunder-peal  
that died

In ages past; that gaze, a transient  
flash

On which the midnight closed, and  
on that arm

The worm has made his meal.  
The virtuous man, 150

Who, great in his humility, as kings  
Are little in their grandeur; he  
who leads

Invincibly a life of resolute good,  
And stands amid the silent dun-  
geon-depths

More free and fearless than the  
trembling judge, 155

Who, clothed in venal power,  
vainly strove

To bind the impassive spirit;—  
when he falls,

His mild eye beams benevolence  
no more:

Withered the hand outstretched  
but to relieve;

Sunk Reason's simple eloquence,  
that rolled 160

But to appal the guilty. Yes! the  
grave

Hath quenched that eye, and  
Death's relentless frost

Withered that arm: but the unfad-  
ing fame

Which Virtue hangs upon its vo-  
tary's tomb;

The deathless memory of that man,  
whom kings 165

Call to their mind and tremble;  
the remembrance

With which the happy spirit con-  
templates

Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth,  
Shall never pass away.

'Nature rejects the monarch, not  
the man; 170

The subject, not the citizen: for  
kings

And subjects, mutual foes, forever  
play

A losing game into each other's  
hands,

Whose stakes are vice and misery.  
The man

Of virtuous soul commands not,  
nor obeys. 175

Power, like a desolating pestilence,  
Pollutes whate'er it touches; and  
obedience,

Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom,  
truth,

Makes slaves of men, and, of the  
human frame,

A mechanized automaton.  
When Nero, 180

High over flaming Rome, with sav-  
age joy

Lowered like a fiend, drank with  
enraptured ear

The shrieks of agonizing death, be-  
held

The frightful desolation spread,  
and felt

A new-created sense within his  
soul

Thrill to the sight, and vibrate to  
the sound; 186

Think'st thou his grandeur had not  
overcome

The force of human kindness? and,  
when Rome,

With one stern blow, hurled not  
the tyrant down,

Crushed not the arm red with her  
dearest blood, 190

Had not submissive abjectness de-  
stroyed

Nature's suggestions?  
Look on yonder earth:

The golden harvests spring; the  
unfailing sun

Sheds light and life; the fruits, the  
flowers, the trees,

Arise in due succession; all things  
speak 195

Peace, harmony, and love. The universe,  
 In Nature's silent eloquence, declares  
 That all fulfil the works of love and joy,—  
 All but the outcast, Man. He fabricates  
 The sword which stabs his peace; he cherisheth 200  
 The snakes that gnaw his heart; he raiseth up  
 The tyrant, whose delight is in his woe,  
 Whose sport is in his agony. Yon sun,  
 Lights it the great alone? Yon silver beams,  
 Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage thatch 205  
 Than on the dome of kings? Is mother Earth  
 A step-dame to her numerous sons, who earn  
 Her unshared gifts with unremitting toil;  
 A mother only to those puling babes  
 Who, nursed in ease and luxury, make men 210  
 The playthings of their babyhood, and mar,  
 In self-important childishness, that peace  
 Which men alone appreciate?  
 'Spirit of Nature! no.  
 The pure diffusion of thy essence throbs 215  
 Alike in every human heart.  
 Thou, aye, erectest there  
 Thy throne of power unappealable:  
 Thou art the judge beneath whose nod  
 Man's brief and frail authority 220  
 Is powerless as the wind  
 That passeth idly by.

Thine the tribunal which surpasseth  
 The show of human justice,  
 As God surpasses man. 225  
 'Spirit of Nature; thou  
 Life of interminable multitudes;  
 Soul of those mighty spheres  
 Whose changeless paths through  
 Heaven's deep silence lie;  
 Soul of that smallest being, 230  
 The dwelling of whose life  
 Is one faint April sun-  
 gleam;—  
 Man, like these passive  
 things,  
 Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth:  
 Like theirs, his age of endless  
 peace, 235  
 Which time is fast matur-  
 ing,  
 Will swiftly, surely come;  
 And the unbounded frame, which  
 thou pervadest,  
 Will be without a flaw  
 Marring its perfect sym-  
 metry. 240

## IV

'How beautiful this night! the  
 balmiest sigh,  
 Which vernal zephyrs breathe in  
 evening's ear,  
 Were discord to the speaking  
 quietude  
 That wraps this moveless scene.  
 Heaven's ebon vault,  
 Studded with stars unutterably  
 bright, 5  
 Through which the moon's un-  
 clouded grandeur rolls,  
 Seems like a canopy which love had  
 spread  
 To curtain her sleeping world. Yon  
 gentle hills,  
 Robed in a garment of untrodden  
 snow;



Yon darksome rocks, whence icicles  
depend, 10  
So stainless, that their white and  
glittering spires  
Tinge not the moon's pure beam;  
yon castled steep,  
Whose banner hangeth o'er the  
time-worn tower  
So idly, that rapt fancy deemeth  
it  
A metaphor of peace;—all form a  
scene  
Where musing Solitude might love  
to lift 16  
Her soul above this sphere of earth-  
liness;  
Where Silence undisturbed might  
watch alone,  
So cold, so bright, so still.  
The orb of day,  
In southern climes, o'er ocean's  
waveless field 20  
Sinks sweetly smiling: not the  
faintest breath  
Steals o'er the unruffled deep; the  
clouds of eve  
Reflect unmoved the lingering  
beam of day;  
And vesper's image on the western  
main  
Is beautifully still. To-morrow  
comes:  
Cloud upon cloud, in dark and  
deepening mass, 26  
Roll o'er the blackened waters;  
the deep roar  
Of distant thunder mutters aw-  
fully;  
Tempest unfolds its pinion o'er the  
gloom  
That shrouds the boiling surge; the  
pitiless fiend, 30  
With all his winds and lightnings,  
tracks his prey;  
The torn deep yawns,—the vessel  
finds a grave

Beneath its jagged gulf.  
Ah! whence yon glare  
That fires the arch of Heaven?—  
that dark red smoke  
Blotting the silver moon? The stars  
are quenched 35  
In darkness, and the pure and  
spangling snow  
Gleams faintly through the gloom  
that gathers round!  
Hark to that roar, whose swift and  
deaf'ning peals  
In countless echoes through the  
mountains ring,  
Startling pale Midnight on her  
starry throne! 40  
Now swells the intermingling din;  
the jar  
Frequent and frightful of the burst-  
ing bomb;  
The falling beam, the shriek, the  
groan, the shout,  
The ceaseless clangour, and the  
rush of men  
Inebriate with rage:—loud, and  
more loud 45  
The discord grows; till pale Death  
shuts the scene,  
And o'er the conqueror and the  
conquered draws  
His cold and bloody shroud.—Of  
all the men  
Whom day's departing beam saw  
blooming there,  
In proud and vigorous health; of  
all the hearts 50  
That beat with anxious life at sun-  
set there;  
How few survive, how few are  
beating now!  
All is deep silence, like the fearful  
calm  
That slumbers in the storm's por-  
tentous pause;  
Save when the frantic wail of  
widowed love 55

Comes shuddering on the blast, or  
the faint moan  
With which some soul bursts from  
the frame of clay  
Wrapped round its struggling pow-  
ers.

The gray morn  
Dawns on the mournful scene; the  
sulphurous smoke  
Before the icy wind slow rolls  
away,  
And the bright beams of frosty  
morning dance 61  
Along the spangling snow. There  
tracks of blood  
Even to the forest's depth, and  
scattered arms,  
And lifeless warriors, whose hard  
lineaments  
Death's self could change not,  
mark the dreadful path 65  
Of the outsallying victors: far be-  
hind,  
Black ashes note where their proud  
city stood.  
Within yon forest is a gloomy  
glen—  
Each tree which guards its dark-  
ness from the day,  
Waves o'er a warrior's tomb.

I see thee shrink, 70  
Surpassing Spirit!—wert thou hu-  
man else?

I see a shade of doubt and horror  
fleet

Across thy stainless features: yet  
fear not;

This is no unconnected misery,  
Nor stands uncaused, and irretriev-  
able. 75

Man's evil nature, that apology  
Which kings who rule, and cowards  
who crouch, set up

For their unnumbered crimes,  
sheds not the blood

Which desolates the discord-wasted  
land.

From kings, and priests, and states-  
men, war arose, 80

Whose safety is man's deep unbet-  
tered woe,

Whose grandeur his debasement.  
Let the axe

Strike at the root, the poison-tree  
will fall;

And where its venom'd exhalations  
spread

Ruin, and death, and woe, where  
millions lay 85

Quenching the serpent's famine,  
and their bones

Bleaching unburied in the putrid  
blast,

A garden shall arise, in loveliness  
Surpassing fabled Eden.

Hath Nature's soul,  
That formed this world so beauti-  
ful, that spread 90

Earth's lap with plenty, and life's  
smallest chord

Strung to unchanging unison, that  
gave

The happy birds their dwelling in  
the grove,

That yielded to the wanderers of  
the deep

The lovely silence of the unfath-  
omed main, 95

And filled the meanest worm that  
crawls in dust

With spirit, thought, and love; on  
Man alone,

Partial in causeless malice, wan-  
tonly

Heaped ruin, vice, and slavery; his  
soul

Blasted with withering curses;  
placed afar 100

The meteor-happiness, that shuns  
his grasp,

But serving on the frightful gulf to  
glare,

Rent wide beneath his footsteps?

Nature!—no!

Kings, priests, and statesmen, blast  
the human flower  
Even in its tender bud; their influ-  
ence darts 105  
Like subtle poison through the  
bloodless veins  
Of desolate society. The child,  
Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred  
name,  
Swells with the unnatural pride of  
crime, and lifts  
His baby-sword even in a hero's  
mood. 110  
This infant-arm becomes the blood-  
iest scourge  
Of devastated earth; whilst spe-  
cious names,  
Learned in soft childhood's unsus-  
pecting hour,  
Serve as the sophisms with which  
manhood dims  
Bright Reason's ray, and sanctifies  
the sword 115  
Upraised to shed a brother's inno-  
cent blood.  
Let priest-led slaves cease to pro-  
claim that man  
Inherits vice and misery, when  
Force  
And Falsehood hang even o'er the  
cradled babe,  
Stifling with rudest grasp all natu-  
ral good. 120  
Ah! to the stranger-soul, when  
first it peeps  
From its new tenement, and looks  
abroad  
For happiness and sympathy, how  
stern  
And desolate a tract is this wide  
world!  
How withered all the buds of natu-  
ral good! 125  
No shade, no shelter from the  
sweeping storms  
Of pitiless power! On its wretched  
frame,

Poisoned, perchance, by the disease  
and woe  
Heaped on the wretched parent  
whence it sprung  
By morals, law, and custom, the  
pure winds 130  
Of Heaven, that renovate the in-  
sect tribes,  
May breathe not. The untainting  
light of day  
May visit not its longings. It is  
bound  
Ere it has life: yea, all the chains  
are forged  
Long ere its being: all liberty and  
love 135  
And peace is torn from its defence-  
lessness;  
Cursed from its birth, even from  
its cradle doomed  
To abjectness and bondage!

'Throughout this varied and eternal  
world  
Soul is the only element: the  
block 140  
That for uncounted ages has re-  
mained  
The moveless pillar of a mountain's  
weight  
Is active, living spirit. Every grain  
Is sentient both in unity and  
part,  
And the minutest atom compre-  
hends 145  
A world of loves and hatreds; these  
beget  
Evil and good: hence truth and  
falsehood spring;  
Hence will and thought and action,  
all the germs  
Of pain or pleasure, sympathy or  
hate,  
That variegate the eternal uni-  
verse. 150  
Soul is not more polluted than the  
beams

Of Heaven's pure orb, ere round  
 their rapid lines  
 The taint of earth-born atmos-  
 pheres arise.  
 'Man is of soul and body, formed  
 for deeds  
 Of high resolve, on fancy's boldest  
 wing 155  
 To soar unwearied, fearlessly to  
 turn  
 The keenest pangs to peacefulness,  
 and taste  
 The joys which mingled sense and  
 spirit yield.  
 Or he is formed for abjectness and  
 woe,  
 To grovel on the dunghill of his  
 fears, 160  
 To shrink at every sound, to quench  
 the flame  
 Of natural love in sensualism, to  
 know  
 That hour as blessed when on his  
 worthless days  
 The frozen hand of Death shall set  
 its seal,  
 Yet fear the cure, though hating the  
 disease. 165  
 The one is man that shall hereafter  
 be;  
 The other, man as vice has made  
 him now.  
 'War is the statesman's game, the  
 priest's delight,  
 The lawyer's jest, the hired assas-  
 sin's trade,  
 And, to those royal murderers,  
 whose mean thrones 170  
 Are bought by crimes of treachery  
 and gore,  
 The bread they eat, the staff on  
 which they lean.  
 Guards, garbed in blood-red livery,  
 surround  
 Their palaces, participate the  
 crimes

That force defends, and from a na-  
 tion's rage 175  
 Secure the crown, which all the  
 curses reach  
 That famine, frenzy, woe and  
 penury breathe.  
 These are the hired bravos who de-  
 fend  
 The tyrant's throne—the bullies of  
 his fear:  
 These are the sinks and channels  
 of worst vice, 180  
 The refuse of society, the dregs  
 Of all that is most vile: their cold  
 hearts blend  
 Deceit with sternness, ignorance  
 with pride,  
 All that is mean and villanous, with  
 rage  
 Which hopelessness of good, and  
 self-contempt, 185  
 Alone might kindle; they are  
 decked in wealth,  
 Honour and power, then are sent  
 abroad  
 To do their work. The pestilence  
 that stalks  
 In gloomy triumph through some  
 eastern land  
 Is less destroying. They cajole with  
 gold, 190  
 And promises of fame, the thought-  
 less youth  
 Already crushed with servitude: he  
 knows  
 His wretchedness too late, and  
 cherishes  
 Repentance for his ruin, when his  
 doom  
 Is sealed in gold and blood! 195  
 Those too the tyrant serve, who,  
 skilled to snare  
 The feet of Justice in the toils of  
 law,  
 Stand, ready to oppress the weaker  
 still;

And right or wrong will vindicate  
for gold,  
Sneering at public virtue, which  
beneath 200  
Their pitiless tread lies torn and  
trampled, where  
Honour sits smiling at the sale of  
truth.

'Then grave and hoary-headed  
hypocrites,  
Without a hope, a passion, or a  
love,  
Who, through a life of luxury and  
lies, 205  
Have crept by flattery to the seats  
of power,  
Support the system whence their  
honours flow. . . .  
They have three words:—well ty-  
rants know their use,  
Well pay them for the loan, with  
usury  
Torn from a bleeding world!—God,  
Hell, and Heaven. 210  
A vengeful, pitiless, and almighty  
fiend,  
Whose mercy is a nickname for the  
rage  
Of tameless tigers hungering for  
blood.  
Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,  
Where poisonous and undying  
worms prolong 215  
Eternal misery to those hapless  
slaves  
Whose life has been a penance for  
its crimes.  
And Heaven, a meed for those who  
dare belie  
Their human nature, quake, be-  
lieve, and cringe  
Before the mockeries of earthly  
power 220

'These tools the tyrant tempers to  
his work,

Wields in his wrath, and as he wills  
destroys,  
Omnipotent in wickedness: the  
while  
Youth springs, age moulders, man-  
hood tamely does  
His bidding, bribed by short-lived  
joys to lend 225  
Force to the weakness of his trem-  
bling arm.

'They rise, they fall; one generation  
comes  
Yielding its harvest to destruction's  
scythe.  
It fades, another blossoms: yet be-  
hold!  
Red glows the tyrant's stamp-mark  
on its bloom, 230  
Withering and cankering deep its  
passive prime.  
He has invented lying words and  
modes,  
Empty and vain as his own coreless  
heart;  
Evasive meanings, nothings of  
much sound,  
To lure the heedless victim to the  
toils 235  
Spread round the valley of its para-  
dise.

'Look to thyself, priest, conqueror,  
or prince!  
Whether thy trade is falsehood, and  
thy lusts  
Deep wallow in the earnings of the  
poor,  
With whom thy Master was:—or  
thou delight'st 240  
In numbering o'er the myriads of  
thy slain,  
All misery weighing nothing in the  
scale  
Against thy short-lived fame: or  
thou dost load

With cowardice and crime the  
 groaning land,  
 A pomp-fed king. Look to thy  
 wretched self! 245  
 Ay, art thou not the veriest slave  
 that e'er  
 Crawled on the loathing earth?  
 Are not thy days  
 Days of unsatisfying listless-  
 ness?  
 Dost thou not cry, ere night's long  
 rack is o'er,  
 "When will the morning come?" Is  
 not thy youth 250  
 A vain and feverish dream of sen-  
 sualism?  
 Thy manhood blighted with unripe  
 disease?  
 Are not thy views of unregretted  
 death  
 Drear, comfortless, and horrible?  
 Thy mind,  
 Is it not morbid as thy nerveless  
 frame, 255  
 Incapable of judgment, hope, or  
 love?  
 And dost thou wish the errors to  
 survive  
 That bar thee from all sympathies  
 of good,  
 After the miserable interest  
 Thou hold'st in their protraction?  
 When the grave 260  
 Has swallowed up thy memory and  
 thyself,  
 Dost thou desire the bane that  
 poisons earth  
 To twine its roots around thy  
 confined clay,  
 Spring from thy bones, and blossom  
 on thy tomb,  
 That of its fruit thy babes may  
 eat and die? 265

## V

Thus do the generations of the  
 earth

Go to the grave, and issue from the  
 womb,  
 Surviving still the imperishable  
 change  
 That renovates the world; even as  
 the leaves  
 Which the keen frost-wind of the  
 waning year 5  
 Has scattered on the forest soil,  
 and heaped  
 For many reasons there—though  
 long they choke,  
 Loading with loathsome rottenness  
 the land,  
 All germs of promise, yet when the  
 tall trees  
 From which they fell, shorn of their  
 lovely shapes, 10  
 Lie level with the earth to moulder  
 there,  
 They fertilize the land they long  
 deformed,  
 Till from the breathing lawn a for-  
 est springs  
 Of youth, integrity, and loveliness,  
 Like that which gave it life, to  
 spring and die, 15  
 Thus suicidal selfishness, that  
 blights  
 The fairest feelings of the opening  
 heart,  
 Is destined to decay, whilst from  
 the soil  
 Shall spring all virtue, all delight,  
 all love,  
 And judgment cease to wage un-  
 natural war 20  
 With passion's unsubduable array.  
 Twin-sister of religion, selfishness!  
 Rival in crime and falsehood, aping  
 all  
 The wanton horrors of her bloody  
 play;  
 Yet frozen, unimpassioned, spirit-  
 less, 25  
 Shunning the light, and owning not  
 its name,

Compelled, by its deformity, to  
 screen  
 With flimsy veil of justice and of  
 right,  
 Its unattractive lineaments, that  
 scare  
 All, save the brood of ignorance: at  
 once 30  
 The cause and the effect of ty-  
 ranny;  
 Unblushing, hardened, sensual, and  
 vile;  
 Dead to all love but of its abject-  
 ness,  
 With heart impassive by more  
 noble powers  
 Than unshared pleasure, sordid  
 gain, or fame; 35  
 Despising its own miserable  
 being,  
 Which still it longs, yet fears to dis-  
 enthral.

‘Hence commerce springs, the venal  
 interchange  
 Of all that human art or nature  
 yield;  
 Which wealth should purchase not,  
 but want demand, 40  
 And natural kindness hasten to sup-  
 ply  
 From the full fountain of its bound-  
 less love,  
 For ever stifled, drained, and  
 tainted now.  
 Commerce! beneath whose poison-  
 breathing shade  
 No solitary virtue dares to  
 spring, 45  
 But Poverty and Wealth with  
 equal hand  
 Scatter their withering curses, and  
 unfold  
 The doors of premature and vio-  
 lent death,  
 To pining famine and full-fed  
 disease,

To all that shares the lot of human  
 life, 50  
 Which poisoned, body and soul,  
 scarce drags the chain,  
 That lengthens as it goes and  
 clanks behind.

‘Commerce has set the mark of sel-  
 fishness,  
 The signet of its all-enslaving  
 power  
 Upon a shining ore, and called it  
 gold: 55  
 Before whose image bow the vulgar  
 great,  
 The vainly rich, the miserable  
 proud,  
 The mob of peasants, nobles,  
 priests, and kings,  
 And with blind feelings reverence  
 the power  
 That grinds them to the dust of  
 misery. 60  
 But in the temple of their hireling  
 hearts  
 Gold is a living god, and rules in  
 scorn  
 All earthly things but virtue.

‘Since tyrants, by the sale of hu-  
 man life,  
 Heap luxuries to their sensualism,  
 and fame 65  
 To their wide-wasting and insatiate  
 pride,  
 Success has sanctioned to a credu-  
 lous world  
 The ruin, the disgrace, the woe of  
 war.  
 His hosts of blind and unresisting  
 dupes  
 The despot numbers; from his  
 cabinet 70  
 These puppets of his schemes he  
 moves at will,  
 Even as the slaves by force or  
 famine driven,

Beneath a vulgar master, to perform  
 A task of cold and brutal drudgery;—  
 Hardened to hope, insensible to fear, 75  
 Scarce living pulleys of a dead machine,  
 Mere wheels of work and articles of trade,  
 That grace the proud and noisy pomp of wealth!  
  
 'The harmony and happiness of man  
 Yields to the wealth of nations; that which lifts 80  
 His nature to the heaven of its pride,  
 Is bartered for the poison of his soul;  
 The weight that drags to earth his towering hopes,  
 Blighting all prospect but of selfish gain,  
 Withering all passion but of slavish fear, 85  
 Extinguishing all free and generous love  
 Of enterprise and daring, even the pulse  
 That fancy kindles in the beating heart  
 To mingle with sensation, it destroys,—  
 Leaves nothing but the sordid lust of self, 90  
 The grovelling hope of interest and gold,  
 Unqualified, unmingled, unrequited  
 Even by hypocrisy.  
                     And statesmen boast  
 Of wealth! The wordy eloquence, that lives  
 After the ruin of their hearts, can gild 95

The bitter poison of a nation's woe,  
 Can turn the worship of the servile mob  
 To their corrupt and glaring idol, Fame,  
 From Virtue, trampled by its iron tread,  
 Although its dazzling pedestal be raised 100  
 Amid the horrors of a limb-strewn field,  
 With desolated dwellings smoking round.  
 The man of ease, who, by his warm fireside,  
 To deeds of charitable intercourse, And bare fulfilment of the common laws 105  
 Of decency and prejudice, confines  
 The struggling nature of his human heart,  
 Is duped by their cold sophistry; he sheds  
 A passing tear perchance upon the wreck  
 Of earthly peace, when near his dwelling's door 110  
 The frightful waves are driven,—when his son  
 Is murdered by the tyrant, or religion  
 Drives his wife raving mad. But the poor man,  
 Whose life is misery, and fear, and care;  
 Whom the morn wakens but to fruitless toil; 115  
 Who ever hears his famished offspring's scream,  
 Whom their pale mother's uncomplaining gaze  
 For ever meets, and the proud rich man's eye  
 Flashing command, and the heart-breaking scene



Of thousands like himself;—he  
 little heeds 120  
 The rhetoric of tyranny; his hate  
 Is quenchless as his wrongs; he  
 laughs to scorn  
 The vain and bitter mockery of  
 words,  
 Feeling the horror of the tyrant's  
 deeds,  
 And unrestrained but by the arm of  
 power, 125  
 That knows and dreads his enmity.  
 'The iron rod of Penury still com-  
 pels  
 Her wretched slave to bow the knee  
 to wealth,  
 And poison, with unprofitable toil,  
 A life too void of solace to con-  
 firm 130  
 The very chains that bind him to  
 his doom.  
 Nature, impartial in munificence,  
 Has gifted man with all-subduing  
 will.  
 Matter, with all its transitory  
 shapes,  
 Lies subjected and plastic at his  
 feet, 135  
 That, weak from bondage, tremble  
 as they tread.  
 How many a rustic Milton has  
 passed by,  
 Stifling the speechless longings of  
 his heart,  
 In unremitting drudgery and  
 care!  
 How many a vulgar Cato has com-  
 pelled 140  
 His energies, no longer tameless  
 then,  
 To mould a pin, or fabricate a nail!  
 How many a Newton, to whose pas-  
 sive ken  
 Those mighty spheres that gem in-  
 finity

Were only specks of tinsel, fixed in  
 Heaven 145  
 To light the midnights of his native  
 town!  
 'Yet every heart contains perfec-  
 tion's germ:  
 The wisest of the sages of the earth,  
 That ever from the stores of reason  
 drew  
 Science and truth, and virtue's  
 dreadless tone, 150  
 Were but a weak and inexperienced  
 boy,  
 Proud, sensual, unimpassioned, un-  
 imbued  
 With pure desire and universal love,  
 Compared to that high being, of  
 cloudless brain,  
 Untainted passion, elevated will, 155  
 Which Death (who even would  
 linger long in awe  
 Within his noble presence, and be-  
 neath  
 His changeless eyebeam) might  
 alone subdue.  
 Him, every slave now dragging  
 through the filth  
 Of some corrupted city his sad  
 life, 160  
 Pining with famine, swoln with  
 luxury,  
 Blunting the keenness of his spir-  
 itual sense  
 With narrow schemings and un-  
 worthy cares,  
 Or madly rushing through all vi-  
 olent crime,  
 To move the deep stagnation of his  
 soul,— 165  
 Might imitate and equal.  
 But mean lust  
 Has bound its chains so tight  
 around the earth,  
 That all within it but the virtuous  
 man

Is venal: gold or fame will surely  
 reach  
 The price prefixed by selfishness,  
 to all 170  
 But him of resolute and unchanging  
 will;  
 Whom, nor the plaudits of a servile  
 crowd,  
 Nor the vile joys of tainting luxury,  
 Can bribe to yield his elevated  
 soul  
 To Tyranny or Falsehood, though  
 they wield 175  
 With blood-red hand the sceptre of  
 the world.

‘All things are sold: the very light  
 of Heaven  
 Is venal; earth’s unsparing gifts of  
 love,  
 The smallest and most despicable  
 things  
 That lurk in the abysses of the  
 deep, 180  
 All objects of our life, even life  
 itself,  
 And the poor pittance which the  
 laws allow  
 Of liberty, the fellowship of man,  
 Those duties which his heart of hu-  
 man love  
 Should urge him to perform instinc-  
 tively, 185  
 Are bought and sold as in a public  
 mart  
 Of undisguising selfishness, that  
 sets  
 On each its price, the stamp-mark  
 of her reign.  
 Even love is sold; the solace of all  
 woe  
 Is turned to deadliest agony, old  
 age 190  
 Shivers in selfish beauty’s loathing  
 arms,  
 And youth’s corrupted impulses  
 prepare

A life of horror from the blighting  
 bane  
 Of commerce; whilst the pestilence  
 that springs  
 From unenjoying sensualism, has  
 filled 195  
 All human life with hydra-headed  
 woes.

‘Falsehood demands but gold to  
 pay the pangs  
 Of outraged conscience; for the  
 slavish priest  
 Sets no great value on his hireling  
 faith:  
 A little passing pomp, some servile  
 souls, 200  
 Whom cowardice itself might safely  
 chain,  
 Or the spare mite of avarice could  
 bribe  
 To deck the triumph of their lan-  
 guid zeal,  
 Can make him minister to tyranny.  
 More daring crime requires a loftier  
 meed: 205  
 Without a shudder, the slave-  
 soldier lends  
 His arm to murderous deeds, and  
 steels his heart,  
 When the dread eloquence of dying  
 men,  
 Low mingling on the lonely field  
 of fame,  
 Assails that nature, whose applause  
 he sells 210  
 For the gross blessings of a patriot  
 mob,  
 For the vile gratitude of heartless  
 kings,  
 And for a cold world’s good word,  
 —viler still!

‘There is a nobler glory, which sur-  
 vives  
 Until our being fades, and, solac-  
 ing 215

All human care, accompanies its  
change;  
Deserts not virtue in the dungeon's  
gloom,  
And, in the precincts of the palace,  
guides  
Its footsteps through that labyrinth  
of crime;  
Imbues his lineaments with daunt-  
lessness, 220  
Even when, from Power's avenging  
hand, he takes  
Its sweetest, last and noblest title  
—death;  
—The consciousness of good, which  
neither gold,  
Nor sordid fame, nor hope of heav-  
enly bliss  
Can purchase; but a life of resolute  
good, 225  
Unalterable will, quenches desire  
Of universal happiness, the heart  
That beats with it in unison, the  
brain,  
Whose ever wakeful wisdom toils to  
change  
Reason's rich stores for its eternal  
weal. 230

'This commerce of sincerest virtue  
needs  
No mediative signs of selfish-  
ness,  
No jealous intercourse of wretched  
gain,  
No balancings of prudence, cold  
and long;  
In just and equal measure all is  
weighed, 235  
One scale contains the sum of hu-  
man weal,  
And one, the good man's heart.  
How vainly seek  
The selfish for that happiness de-  
nied  
To aught but virtue! Blind and  
hardened, they,

Who hope for peace amid the  
storms of care, 240  
Who covet power they know not  
how to use,  
And sigh for pleasure they refuse  
to give,—  
Madly they frustrate still their own  
designs;  
And, where they hope that quiet to  
enjoy  
Which virtue pictures, bitterness of  
soul, 245  
Pining regrets, and vain repent-  
ances,  
Disease, disgust, and lassitude, per-  
vade  
Their valueless and miserable lives.

'But hoary-headed Selfishness has  
felt  
Its death-blow, and is tottering to  
the grave: 250  
A brighter morn awaits the human  
day,  
When every transfer of earth's  
natural gifts  
Shall be a commerce of good words  
and works;  
When poverty and wealth, the  
thirst of fame, .  
The fear of infamy, disease and  
woe, 255  
War with its million horrors, and  
fierce hell  
Shall live but in the memory of  
Time,  
Who, like a penitent libertine, shall  
start,  
Look back, and shudder at his  
younger years.'

VI

ALL touch, all eye, all ear,  
The Spirit felt the Fairy's burning  
speech.  
O'er the thin texture of its frame,  
The varying periods painted chang-  
ing glows,

As on a summer even, 5  
 When soul-enfolding music floats  
     around,  
 The stainless mirror of the lake  
 Re-images the eastern gloom,  
 Mingling convulsively its purple  
     hues  
 With sunset's burnished  
     gold. 10

Then thus the Spirit spoke:  
 'It is a wild and miserable world!  
 Thorny, and full of care,  
 Which every fiend can make his  
     prey at will.

O Fairy! in the lapse of years, 15  
 Is there no hope in store?  
 Will yon vast suns roll on  
 Interminably, still illuming  
 The night of so many wretched  
     souls,

And see no hope for  
     them? 20

Will not the universal Spirit e'er  
 Revivify this withered limb of  
     Heaven?'

The Fairy calmly smiled  
 In comfort, and a kindling gleam  
     of hope

Suffused the Spirit's linea-  
     ments. 25

'Oh! rest thee tranquil; chase those  
     fearful doubts,  
 Which ne'er could rack an ever-  
     lasting soul,  
 That sees the chains which bind it  
     to its doom.

Yes! crime and misery are in yon-  
     der earth,  
 Falsehood, mistake, and  
     lust; 30

But the eternal world  
 Contains at once the evil and the  
     cure.

Some eminent in virtue shall start  
     up,  
 Even in perversest time:

The truths of their pure lips, that  
     never die, 35  
 Shall bind the scorpion falsehood  
     with a wreath  
 Of ever-living flame,  
 Until the monster sting itself to  
     death.

'How sweet a scene will earth be-  
     come!  
 Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-  
     place, 40  
 Symphonious with the planetary  
     spheres;  
 When man, with changeless Nature  
     coalescing,  
 Will undertake regeneration's  
     work,  
 When its ungenial poles no longer  
     point  
 To the red and baleful sun 45  
 That faintly twinkles there.

'Spirit! on yonder earth.  
 Falsehood now triumphs; deadly  
     power

Has fixed its seal upon the lip of  
     truth!

Madness and misery are there! 50  
 The happiest is most wretched! Yet  
     confide,

Until pure health-drops, from the  
     cup of joy,

Fall like a dew of balm upon the  
     world.

Now, to the scene I show, in silence  
     turn,

And read the blood-stained charter  
     of all woe, 55

Which Nature soon, with re-creat-  
     ing hand,

Will blot in mercy from the book  
     of earth.

How bold the flight of Passion's  
     wandering wing,

How swift the step of Reason's  
     firmer tread,

|                                                         |                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| How calm and sweet the victories<br>of life, 60         | The spirits of the air, the shudder-<br>ing ghost,     |
| How terrorless the triumph of the<br>grave!             | The genii of the elements, the pow-<br>ers             |
| How powerless were the mightiest<br>monarch's arm,      | That give a shape to Nature's<br>varied works, 85      |
| Vain his loud threat, and impotent<br>his frown!        | Had life and place in the corrupt<br>belief            |
| How ludicrous the priest's dog-<br>matic roar!          | Of thy blind heart: yet still thy<br>youthful hands    |
| The weight of his exterminating<br>curse 65             | Were pure of human blood. Then<br>manhood gave         |
| How light! and his affected char-<br>ity,               | Its strength and ardour to thy<br>frenzied brain;      |
| To suit the pressure of the changing<br>times,          | Thine eager gaze scanned the stu-<br>pendous scene, 90 |
| What palpable deceit!—but for thy<br>aid,               | Whose wonders mocked the knowl-<br>edge of thy pride:  |
| Religion! but for thee, prolific<br>fiend,              | Their everlasting and unchanging<br>laws               |
| Who peopled earth with demons,<br>Hell with men, 70     | Reproached thine ignorance.<br>Awhile thou stoodst     |
| And Heaven with slaves!                                 | Baffled and gloomy; then thou<br>didst sum up          |
| 'Thou taintest all thou look'st<br>upon!—the stars,     | The elements of all that thou didst<br>know; 95        |
| Which on thy cradle beamed so<br>brightly sweet,        | The changing seasons, winter's<br>leafless reign,      |
| Were gods to the distempered play-<br>fulness           | The budding of the Heaven-breath-<br>ing trees,        |
| Of thy untutored infancy: the<br>trees, 75              | The eternal orbs that beautify the<br>night,           |
| The grass, the clouds, the moun-<br>tains, and the sea, | The sunrise, and the setting of the<br>moon,           |
| All living things that walk, swim,<br>creep, or fly,    | Earthquakes and wars, and poisons<br>and disease, 100  |
| Were gods: the sun had homage,<br>and the moon          | And all their causes, to an abstract<br>point          |
| Her worshipper. Then thou be-<br>cam'st, a boy,         | Converging, thou didst bend and<br>called it God!      |
| More daring in thy frenzies: every<br>shape, 80         | The self-sufficing, the omnipo-<br>tent,               |
| Monstrous or vast, or beautifully<br>wild,              | The merciful, and the avenging<br>God!                 |
| Which, from sensation's relics,<br>fancy culls;         | Who, prototype of human misrule,<br>sits 105           |

High in Heaven's realm, upon a  
golden throne,  
Even like an earthly king; and  
whose dread work,  
Hell, gapes for ever for the un-  
happy slaves  
Of fate, whom He created, in his  
sport,  
To triumph in their torments when  
they fell! 110  
Earth heard the name; Earth trem-  
bled, as the smoke  
Of His revenge ascended up to  
Heaven,  
Blotting the constellations; and  
the cries  
Of millions, butchered in sweet  
confidence  
And unsuspecting peace, even  
when the bonds 115  
Of safety were confirmed by wordy  
oaths  
Sworn in His dreadful name, rung  
through the land;  
Whilst innocent babes writhed on  
thy stubborn spear,  
And thou didst laugh to hear the  
mother's shriek  
Of maniac gladness, as the sacred  
steel 120  
Felt cold in her torn entrails!

'Religion! thou wert then in man-  
hood's prime:  
But age crept on: one God would  
not suffice  
For senile puerility; thou framedst  
A tale to suit thy dotage, and to  
glut 125  
Thy misery-thirsting soul, that the  
mad fiend  
Thy wickedness had pictured might  
afford  
A plea for sating the unnatural  
thirst  
For murder, rapine, violence, and  
crime,

That still consumed thy being, even  
when 130  
Thou heardst the step of Fate;—  
that flames might light  
Thy funeral scene, and the shrill  
horrent shrieks  
Of parents dying on the pile that  
burned  
To light their children to thy paths,  
the roar  
Of the encircling flames, the ex-  
ulting cries 135  
Of thine apostles, loud commingling  
there,  
Might sate thine hungry ear  
Even on the bed of death!

'But now contempt is mocking thy  
gray hairs;  
Thou art descending to the dark-  
some grave, 140  
Unhonoured and unpitied, but by  
those  
Whose pride is passing by like  
thine, and sheds,  
Like thine, a glare that fades be-  
fore the sun  
Of truth, and shines but in the  
dreadful night  
That long has lowered above the  
ruined world. 145

'Throughout these infinite orbs of  
mingling light,  
Of which yon earth is one, is wide  
diffused  
A Spirit of activity and life,  
That knows no terms, cessation, or  
decay;  
That fades not when the lamp of  
earthly life, 150  
Extinguished in the dampness of the  
grave,  
Awhile there slumbers, more than  
when the babe  
In the dim newness of its being feels  
The impulses of sublunary things,

And all is wonder to unpractised  
 sense: 155  
 But, active, steadfast, and eternal,  
 still  
 Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the  
 tempest roars,  
 Cheers in the day, breathes in the  
 balmy groves,  
 Strengthens in health, and poisons  
 in disease;  
 And in the storm of change, that  
 ceaselessly 160  
 Rolls round the eternal universe,  
 and shakes  
 Its undecaying battlement, pre-  
 sides,  
 Apportioning with irresistible law  
 The place each spring of its ma-  
 chine shall fill;  
 So that when waves on waves tu-  
 multuous heap 165  
 Confusion to the clouds, and  
 fiercely driven  
 Heaven's lightnings scorch the up-  
 rooted ocean-fords,  
 Whilst, to the eye of shipwrecked  
 mariner,  
 Lone sitting on the bare and shud-  
 dering rock,  
 All seems unlinked contingency and  
 chance: 170  
 No atom of this turbulence fulfils  
 A vague and unnecessitated task,  
 Or acts but as it must and ought to  
 act.  
 Even the minutest molecule of light,  
 That in an April sunbeam's fleet-  
 ing glow 175  
 Fulfils its destined, though invis-  
 ible work,  
 The universal Spirit guides; nor  
 less,  
 When merciless ambition, or mad  
 zeal,  
 Has led two hosts of dupes to bat-  
 tle-field,

That, blind, they there may dig  
 each other's graves, 180  
 And call the sad work glory, does it  
 rule  
 All passions: not a thought, a will,  
 an act,  
 No working of the tyrant's moody  
 mind,  
 Nor one misgiving of the slaves who  
 boast  
 Their servitude, to hide the shame  
 they feel, 185  
 Nor the events enchainning every  
 will,  
 That from the depths of unre-  
 corded time  
 Have drawn all-influencing virtue,  
 pass  
 Unrecognized, or unforeseen by  
 thee,  
 Soul of the Universe! eternal  
 spring 190  
 Of life and death, of happiness and  
 woe,  
 Of all that chequers the phantas-  
 mal scene  
 That floats before our eyes in  
 wavering light,  
 Which gleams but on the darkness  
 of our prison,  
 Whose chains and massy  
 walls 195  
 We feel, but cannot see.  
 'Spirit of Nature! all-sufficing  
 Power,  
 Necessity! thou mother of the  
 world!  
 Unlike the God of human error,  
 thou  
 Requir'st no prayers or praises;  
 the caprice 200  
 Of man's weak will belongs no  
 more to thee  
 Than do the changeful passions of  
 his breast  
 To thy unvarying harmony: the  
 slave,

Whose horrible lusts spread misery  
 o'er the world,  
 And the good man, who lifts, with  
 virtuous pride, 205  
 His being, in the sight of happiness,  
 That springs from his own works;  
 the poison-tree,  
 Beneath whose shade all life is  
 withered up,  
 And the fair oak, whose leafy  
 dome affords  
 A temple where the vows of happy  
 love 210  
 Are registered, are equal in thy  
 sight:  
 No love, no hate thou cherishest:  
 revenge  
 And favouritism, and worst desire  
 of fame  
 Thou know'st not: all that the wide  
 world contains  
 Are but thy passive instruments,  
 and thou 215  
 Regard'st them all with an impar-  
 tial eye,  
 Whose joy or pain thy nature can-  
 not feel,  
 Because thou hast not human  
 sense,  
 Because thou art not human  
 mind.  
 'Yes! when the sweeping storm  
 of time 220  
 Has sung its death-dirge o'er the  
 ruined fanes  
 And broken altars of the almighty  
 Fiend  
 Whose name usurps thy honours,  
 and the blood  
 Through centuries clotted there, has  
 floated down  
 The tainted flood of ages, shalt  
 thou live 225  
 Unchangeable! A shrine is raised  
 to thee,  
 Which, nor the tempest-breath  
 of time,

Nor the interminable flood,  
 Over earth's slight pageant  
 rolling,  
 Availeth to destroy,— 230  
 The sensitive extension of the  
 world.  
 That wondrous and eternal  
 fane,  
 Where pain and pleasure, good and  
 evil join,  
 To do the will of strong necessity,  
 And life, in multitudinous shapes,  
 Still pressing forward where no  
 term can be, 236  
 Like hungry and unresting  
 flame  
 Curls round the eternal columns of  
 its strength.'

## VII

*Spirit.*

'I WAS an infant when my mother  
 went  
 To see an atheist burned. She took  
 me there:  
 The dark-robed priests were met  
 around the pile;  
 The multitude was gazing silently;  
 And as the culprit passed with  
 dauntless mien, 5  
 Tempered disdain in his unaltering  
 eye,  
 Mixed with a quiet smile, shone  
 calmly forth:  
 The thirsty fire crept round his  
 manly limbs;  
 His resolute eyes were scorched to  
 blindness soon;  
 His death-pang rent my heart! the  
 insensate mob 10  
 Uttered a cry of triumph, and I  
 wept.  
 "Weep not, child!" cried my  
 mother, "for that man  
 Has said, There is no God."



*Fairy.*

‘There is no God!  
Nature confirms the faith his death-  
groan sealed:  
Let heaven and earth, let man’s  
revolving race, 15  
His ceaseless generations tell their  
tale;  
Let every part depending on the  
chain  
That links it to the whole, point to  
the hand  
That grasps its term! let every seed  
that falls  
In silent eloquence unfold its  
store 20  
Of argument; infinity within,  
Infinity without, belie creation;  
The exterminable spirit it contains  
Is nature’s only God; but human  
pride 24  
Is skilful to invent most serious  
names  
To hide its ignorance.

The name of God  
Has fenced about all crime with  
holiness,  
Himself the creature of His wor-  
shippers,  
Whose names and attributes and  
passions change,  
Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God,  
or Lord, 30  
Even with the human dupes who  
build His shrines,  
Still serving o’er the war-polluted  
world  
For desolation’s watchword;  
whether hosts  
Stain His death-blushing chariot-  
wheels, as on  
Triumphantly they roll, whilst  
Brahmins raise 35  
A sacred hymn to mingle with the  
groans;  
Or countless partners of His power  
divide

His tyranny to weakness; or the  
smoke  
Of burning towns, the cries of fe-  
male helplessness,  
Unarmed old age, and youth, and  
infancy, 40  
Horribly massacred, ascend to  
Heaven  
In honour of His name; or, last and  
worst,  
Earth groans beneath religion’s iron  
age,  
And priests dare babble of a God  
of peace,  
Even whilst their hands are red  
with guiltless blood, 45  
Murdering the while, uprooting  
every germ  
Of truth, exterminating, spoiling  
all,  
Making the earth a slaughter-  
house!

‘O Spirit! through the sense  
By which thy inner nature was ap-  
prised 50  
Of outward shows, vague dreams  
have rolled,  
And varied reminiscences have  
waked  
Tablets that never fade;  
All things have been imprinted  
there,  
The stars, the sea, the earth, the  
sky, 55  
Even the unshapeliest lineaments  
Of wild and fleeting visions  
Have left a record there  
To testify of earth.

‘These are my empire, for to me is  
given 60  
The wonders of the human world  
to keep,  
And Fancy’s thin creations to  
endow  
With manner, being, and reality;

Therefore a wondrous phantom,  
 from the dreams  
 Of human error's dense and pur-  
 blind faith, 65  
 I will evoke, to meet thy question-  
 ing.  
 Ahasuerus, rise!'

A strange and woe-worn  
 wight  
 Arose beside the battlement,  
 And stood unmoving  
 there. 70  
 His inessential figure cast no shade  
 Upon the golden floor;  
 His port and mien bore mark of  
 many years,  
 And chronicles of untold ancient-  
 ness  
 Were legible within his beamless  
 eye: 75  
 Yet his cheek bore the mark of  
 youth;  
 Freshness and vigour knit his  
 manly frame;  
 The wisdom of old age was min-  
 gled there  
 With youth's primæval daunt-  
 lessness;  
 And inexpressible woe, 80  
 Chastened by fearless resignation,  
 gave  
 An awful grace to his all-speaking  
 brow.

*Spirit.*

'Is there a God?'

*Ahasuerus.*

'Is there a God!—ay, an almighty  
 God,  
 And vengeful as almighty! Once  
 His voice 85  
 Was heard on earth; earth shud-  
 dered at the sound;  
 The fiery-visaged firmament ex-  
 pressed

Abhorrence, and the grave of  
 Nature yawned  
 To swallow all the dauntless and  
 the good  
 That dared to hurl defiance at His  
 throne, 90  
 Girt as it was with power. None but  
 slaves  
 Survived, — cold-blooded slaves,  
 who did the work  
 Of tyrannous omnipotence; whose  
 souls  
 No honest indignation ever urged  
 To elevated daring, to one deed 95  
 Which gross and sensual self did  
 not pollute.  
 These slaves built temples for the  
 omnipotent Fiend,  
 Gorgeous and vast: the costly  
 altars smoked  
 With human blood, and hideous  
 pæans rung  
 Through all the long-drawn aisles.  
 A murderer heard 100  
 His voice in Egypt, one whose gifts  
 and arts  
 Had raised him to his eminence in  
 power,  
 Accomplice of omnipotence in  
 crime,  
 And confidant of the all-knowing  
 one.  
 These were Jehovah's words:—  
 'From an eternity of idleness 106  
 I, God, awoke; in seven days' toil  
 made earth  
 From nothing; rested, and created  
 man:  
 I placed him in a Paradise, and  
 there  
 Planted the tree of evil, so that he  
 Might eat and perish, and My soul  
 procure 111  
 Wherewith to sate its malice, and  
 to turn,  
 Even like a heartless conqueror of  
 the earth,

All misery to My fame. The race  
of men  
Chosen to My honour, with im-  
punity 115  
May sate the lusts I planted in  
their heart.  
Here I command thee hence to  
lead them on,  
Until, with hardened feet, their con-  
quering troops  
Wade on the promised soil through  
woman's blood,  
And make My name be dreaded  
through the land. 120  
Yet ever-burning flame and cease-  
less woe  
Shall be the doom of their eternal  
souls,  
With every soul on this ungrateful  
earth,  
Virtuous or vicious, weak or strong,  
—even all  
Shall perish, to fulfil the blind re-  
venge 125  
(Which you, to men, call justice)  
of their God.'

The murderer's brow  
Quivered with horror.  
'God omnipotent,  
Is there no mercy? must our pun-  
ishment  
Be endless? will long ages roll  
away 130  
And see no term? Oh! wherefore  
hast Thou made  
In mockery and wrath this evil  
earth?  
Mercy becomes the powerful—be  
but just:  
O God! repent and save.'

'One way remains:  
I will beget a Son, and He shall  
bear 135  
The sins of all the world; He shall  
arise

In an unnoticed corner of the  
earth,  
And there shall die upon a cross,  
and purge  
The universal crime; so that the  
few  
On whom My grace descends,  
those who are marked 140  
As vessels to the honour of their  
God,  
May credit this strange sacrifice,  
and save  
Their souls alive: millions shall live  
and die,  
Who ne'er shall call upon their  
Saviour's name,  
But, unredeemed, go to the gaping  
grave. 145  
Thousands shall deem it an old  
woman's tale,  
Such as the nurses frighten babes  
withal:  
These in a gulf of anguish and of  
flame  
Shall curse their reprobation end-  
lessly,  
Yet tenfold pangs shall force them  
to avow, 150  
Even on their beds of torment,  
where they howl,  
My honour, and the justice of their  
doom.  
What then avail their virtuous  
deeds, their thoughts  
Of purity, with radiant genius  
bright,  
Or lit with human reason's earthly  
ray? 155  
Many are called, but few will I  
elect.  
Do thou My bidding, Moses!'  
Even the murderer's cheek  
Was blanched with horror, and his  
quivering lips  
Scarce faintly uttered — 'O al-  
mighty One,  
I tremble and obey!' 160

'O Spirit! centuries have set their  
     seal  
 On this heart of many wounds, and  
     loaded brain,  
 Since the Incarnate came: humbly  
     He came,  
 Veiling His horrible Godhead in  
     the shape  
 Of man, scorned by the world, His  
     name unheard, 165  
 Save by the rabble of His native  
     town,  
 Even as a parish demagogue. He  
     led  
 The crowd; He taught them jus-  
     tice, truth, and peace,  
 In semblance; but He lit within  
     their souls  
 The quenchless flames of zeal, and  
     blessed the sword 170  
 He brought on earth to satiate with  
     the blood  
 Of truth and freedom His malig-  
     nant soul.  
 At length His mortal frame was led  
     to death.  
 I stood beside Him: on the tortur-  
     ing cross  
 No pain assailed His unterrestrial  
     sense; 175  
 And yet He groaned. Indignantly I  
     summed  
 The massacres and miseries which  
     His name  
 Had sanctioned in my country, and  
     I cried,  
 "Go! Go!" in mockery.  
 A smile of godlike malice reillumed  
 His fading lineaments.—"I go,"  
     He cried, 181  
 "But thou shalt wander o'er the  
     unquiet earth  
 Eternally."—The dampness of the  
     grave  
 Bathed my imperishable front. I  
     fell,

And long lay tranced upon the  
     charmèd soil. 185  
 When I awoke Hell burned within  
     my brain,  
 Which staggered on its seat; for all  
     around  
 The mouldering relics of my kin-  
     dred lay,  
 Even as the Almighty's ire arrested  
     them,  
 And in their various attitudes of  
     death 190  
 My murdered children's mute and  
     eyeless skulls  
 Glared ghastlily upno me.  
     But my soul,  
 From sight and sense of the pollut-  
     ing woe  
 Of tyranny, had long learned to  
     prefer  
 Hell's freedom to the servitude of  
     Heaven. 195  
 Therefore I rose, and dauntlessly  
     began  
 My lonely and unending pil-  
     grimage,  
 Resolved to wage unweariable war  
 With my almighty Tyrant, and to  
     hurl  
 Defiance at His impotence to harm  
 Beyond the curse I bore. The very  
     hand 201  
 That barred my passage to the  
     peaceful grave  
 Has crushed the earth to misery,  
     and given  
 Its empire to the chosen of His  
     slaves.  
 These have I seen, even from the  
     earliest dawn 205  
 Of weak, unstable and precarious  
     power,  
 Then preaching peace, as now they  
     practise war;  
 So, when they turned but from the  
     massacre

Of unoffending infidels, to quench  
Their thirst for ruin in the very  
blood 210

That flowed in their own veins,  
and pitiless zeal

Froze every human feeling, as the  
wife

Sheathed in her husband's heart  
the sacred steel,

Even whilst its hopes were dream-  
ing of her love;

And friends to friends, brothers to  
brothers stood 215

Opposed in bloodiest battle-field,  
and war,

Scarce satiable by fate's last death-  
draught, waged,

Drunk from the winepress of the  
Almighty's wrath;

Whilst the red cross, in mockery of  
peace,

Pointed to victory! When the fray  
was done, 220

No remnant of the exterminated  
faith

Survived to tell its ruin, but the  
flesh,

With putrid smoke poisoning the  
atmosphere,

That rotted on the half-extin-  
guished pile.

'Yes! I have seen God's worship-  
pers unsheathe 225

The sword of His revenge, when  
grace descended,

Confirming all unnatural impulses,  
To sanctify their desolating deeds;

And frantic priests waved the ill-  
omened cross

O'er the unhappy earth: then shone  
the sun 230

On showers of gore from the up-  
flashing steel

Of safe assassination, and all crime  
Made stingless by the Spirits of the  
Lord,

And blood-red rainbows canopied  
the land.

'Spirit, no year of my eventful be-  
ing 235

Has passed unstained by crime and  
misery,

Which flows from God's own faith.  
I've marked His slaves

With tongues whose lies are venom-  
ous, beguile

The insensate mob, and, whilst one  
hand was red

With murder, feign to stretch the  
other out 240

For brotherhood and peace; and  
that they now

Babble of love and mercy, whilst  
their deeds

Are marked with all the narrow-  
ness and crime

That Freedom's young arm dare  
not yet chastise,

Reason may claim our gratitude,  
who now 245

Establishing the imperishable  
throne

Of truth, and stubborn virtue,  
maketh vain

The unprevailing malice of my Foe,  
Whose bootless rage heaps tor-  
ments for the brave,

Adds impotent eternities to pain,  
Whilst keenest disappointment

racks His breast 251

To see the smiles of peace around  
them play,

To frustrate or to sanctify their  
doom.

'Thus have I stood,—through a  
wild waste of years

Struggling with whirlwinds of mad  
agony, 255

Yet peaceful, and serene, and self-  
enshrined,

Mocking my powerless Tyrant's  
horrible curse

With stubborn and unalterable will,  
 Even as a giant oak, which Heaven's  
     fierce flame  
 Had scathèd in the wilderness, to  
     stand 260  
 A monument of fadeless ruin there;  
 Yet peacefully and movelessly it  
     braves  
 The midnight conflict of the win-  
     try storm,  
     As in the sunlight's calm it  
     spreads  
     Its worn and withered arms on  
     high 265  
 To meet the quiet of a summer's  
     noon.  
     The Fairy waved her wand:  
     Ahasuerus fled  
 Fast as the shapes of mingled shade  
     and mist,  
 That lurk in the glens of a twilight  
     grove, 270  
     Flee from the morning  
     beam:  
     The matter of which dreams are  
     made  
     Not more endowed with actual  
     life  
     Than this phantasmal portrai-  
     ture  
 Of wandering human thought. 275

## VIII

*The Fairy.*

'THE Present and the Past thou  
     hast beheld:  
 It was a desolate sight. Now,  
     Spirit, learn  
     The secrets of the Future.—  
     Time!  
 Unfold the brooding pinion of thy  
     gloom,  
 Render thou up thy half-devoured  
     babes, 5  
 And from the cradles of eternity,  
 Where millions lie lulled to their  
     portioned sleep

By the deep murmuring stream of  
     passing things,  
 Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—  
     Spirit, behold  
     Thy glorious destiny!' 10

Joy to the Spirit came.  
 Through the wide rent in Time's  
     eternal veil,  
 Hope was seen beaming through  
     the mists of fear:  
     Earth was no longer Hell;  
     Love, freedom, health, had  
     given 15  
 Their ripeness to the manhood of  
     its prime,  
     And all its pulses beat  
 Symphonious to the planetary  
     spheres:  
     Then dulcet music swelled  
 Concordant with the life-strings of  
     the soul; 20  
 It throbbed in sweet and languid  
     beatings there,  
 Catching new life from transitory  
     death,—  
 Like the vague sighings of a wind  
     at even,  
 That wakes the wavelets of the  
     slumbering sea  
 And dies on the creation of its  
     breath, 25  
 And sinks and rises, fails and  
     swells by fits:  
     Was the pure stream of feel-  
     ing  
     That sprung from these  
     sweet notes,  
 And o'er the Spirit's human sym-  
     pathies  
 With mild and gentle motion  
     calmly flowed. 30

Joy to the Spirit came,—  
 Such joy as when a lover sees  
 The chosen of his soul in happiness,  
 And witnesses her peace

Whose woe to him were bitterer  
 than death, 35  
 Sees her unfaded cheek  
 Glow mantling in first luxury of  
 health,  
 Thrills with her lovely eyes,  
 Which like two stars amid the  
 heaving main  
 Sparkle through liquid bliss.

Then in her triumph spoke the  
 Fairy Queen: 41  
 'I will not call the ghost of ages  
 gone  
 To unfold the frightful secrets of  
 its lore;

The present now is past,  
 And those events that desolate the  
 earth 45  
 Have faded from the memory of  
 Time,

Who dares not give reality to that  
 Whose being I annul. To me is  
 given

The wonders of the human world  
 to keep,  
 Space, matter, time, and mind.  
 Futurity 50

Exposes now its treasure; let the  
 sight  
 Renew and strengthen all thy fail-  
 ing hope.

O human Spirit! spur thee to the  
 goal

Where virtue fixes universal peace,  
 And midst the ebb and flow of hu-  
 man things, 55

Show somewhat stable, somewhat  
 certain still,

A lighthouse o'er the wild of dreary  
 waves.

'The habitable earth is full of bliss;  
 Those wastes of frozen billows  
 that were hurled  
 By everlasting snowstorms round  
 the poles, 60

Where matter dared not vegetate  
 or live,

But ceaseless frost round the vast  
 solitude

Bound its broad zone of stillness,  
 are unloosed;

And fragrant zephyrs there from  
 spicy isles

Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that  
 rolls 65

Its broad, bright surges to the  
 sloping sand,

Whose roar is wakened into echo-  
 ings sweet

To murmur through the Heaven-  
 breathing groves

And melodize with man's blest na-  
 ture there.

'Those deserts of immeasurable  
 sand, 70

Whose age-collected fervours  
 scarce allowed

A bird to live, a blade of grass to  
 spring,

Where the shrill chirp of the green  
 lizard's love

Broke on the sultry silentness  
 alone,

Now teem with countless rills and  
 shady woods, 75

Cornfields and pastures and white  
 cottages;

And where the startled wilderness  
 beheld

A savage conqueror stained in kin-  
 dred blood,

A tigress sating with the flesh of  
 lambs

The unnatural famine of her tooth-  
 less cubs, 80

Whilst shouts and howlings through  
 the desert rang,

Sloping and smooth the daisy-  
 spangled lawn,

Offering sweet incense to the sun-  
 rise, smiles

To see a babe before his mother's  
 door,  
 Sharing his morning's meal 85  
 With the green and golden basilisk  
 That comes to lick his feet.

'Those trackless deeps, where many  
 a weary sail  
 Has seen above the illimitable  
 plain,  
 Morning on night, and night on  
 morning rise, 90  
 Whilst still no land to greet the  
 wanderer spread  
 Its shadowy mountains on the sun-  
 bright sea,  
 Where the loud roarings of the  
 tempest-waves  
 So long have mingled with the  
 gusty wind  
 In melancholy loneliness, and  
 swept 95  
 The desert of those ocean soli-  
 tudes,  
 But vocal to the sea-bird's harrow-  
 ing shriek,  
 The bellowing monster, and the  
 rushing storm,  
 Now to the sweet and many-min-  
 gling sounds  
 Of kindest human impulses re-  
 spond. 100  
 Those lonely realms bright garden-  
 isles begem,  
 With lightsome clouds and shining  
 seas between,  
 And fertile valleys, resonant with  
 bliss,  
 Whilst green woods overcanopy the  
 wave,  
 Which like a toil-worn labourer  
 leaps to shore, 105  
 To meet the kisses of the flow'rets  
 there.

'All things are recreated, and the  
 flame

Of consentaneous love inspires all  
 life:

The fertile bosom of the earth gives  
 suck

To myriads, who still grow be-  
 neath her care, 110

Rewarding her with their pure per-  
 fectness:

The balmy breathings of the wind  
 inhale

Her virtues, and diffuse them all  
 abroad:

Health floats amid the gentle at-  
 mosphere,

Glowing in the fruits, and mantles on  
 the stream: 115

No storms deform the beaming  
 brow of Heaven,

Nor scatter in the freshness of its  
 pride

The foliage of the ever-verdant  
 trees;

But fruits are ever ripe, flowers  
 ever fair,

And Autumn proudly bears her  
 matron grace, 120

Kindling a flush on the fair cheek  
 of Spring,

Whose virgin bloom beneath the  
 ruddy fruit

Reflects its tint, and blushes into  
 love.

'The lion now forgets to thirst for  
 blood:

There might you see him sporting  
 in the sun 125

Beside the dreadless kid; his claws  
 are sheathed,

His teeth are harmless, custom's  
 force has made

His nature as the nature of a lamb.  
 Like passion's fruit, the night-

shade's tempting bane  
 Poisons no more the pleasure it be-  
 stows: 130

All bitterness is past; the cup of  
 joy



Unmingled mantles to the goblet's  
brim,  
And courts the thirsty lips it fled  
before.

'But chief, ambiguous Man, he  
that can know  
More misery, and dream more joy  
than all; 135

Whose keen sensations thrill within  
his breast  
To mingle with a loftier instinct  
there,

Lending their power to pleasure  
and to pain,  
Yet raising, sharpening, and refin-  
ing each;

Who stands amid the ever-varying  
world, 140  
The burthen or the glory of the  
earth;

He chief perceives the change, his  
being notes  
The gradual renovation, and de-  
fines

Each movement of its progress on  
his mind.

'Man, where the gloom of the long  
polar night 145  
Lowers o'er the snow-clad rocks  
and frozen soil,

Where scarce the hardest herb that  
braves the frost  
Basks in the moonlight's ineffectual  
glow,

Shrank with the plants, and dark-  
ened with the night;  
His chilled and narrow energies,  
his heart, 150

Insensible to courage, truth, or  
love,  
His stunted stature and imbecile  
frame,

Marked him for some abortion of  
the earth,  
Fit compeer of the bears that  
roamed around,

Whose habits and enjoyments were  
his own: 155

His life a feverish dream of stag-  
nant woe,

Whose meagre wants, but scantily  
fulfilled,

Apprised him ever of the joyless  
length

Which his short being's wretched-  
ness had reached;

His death a pang which famine,  
cold and toil 160

Long on the mind, whilst yet the  
vital spark

Clung to the body stubbornly, had  
brought:

All was inflicted here that Earth's  
revenge

Could wreak on the infringers of  
her law;

One curse alone was spared—the  
name of God. 165

'Nor where the tropics bound the  
realms of day

With a broad belt of mingling cloud  
and flame,

Where blue mists through the un-  
moving atmosphere

Scattered the seeds of pestilence,  
and fed

Unnatural vegetation, where the  
land

Teemed with all earthquake, tem-  
pest and disease, 171

Was Man a nobler being; slavery  
Had crushed him to his country's

blood-stained dust;

Or he was bartered for the fame of  
power,

Which all internal impulses de-  
stroying,

Makes human will an article of  
trade;

Or he was changed with Christians  
for their gold, 177

And dragged to distant isles, where  
to the sound

Of the flesh-mangling scourge, he  
 does the work  
 Of all-polluting luxury and wealth,  
 Which doubly visits on the ty-  
 rants' heads 181  
 The long-protracted fulness of  
 their woe;  
 Or he was led to legal butchery,  
 To turn to worms beneath that  
 burning sun,  
 Where kings first leagued against  
 the rights of men, 185  
 And priests first traded with the  
 name of God.  
 'Even where the milder zone af-  
 forded Man  
 A seeming shelter, yet contagion  
 there,  
 Blighting his being with unnum-  
 bered ills,  
 Spread like a quenchless fire; nor  
 truth till late 190  
 Availed to arrest its progress, or  
 create  
 That peace which first in bloodless  
 victory waved  
 Her snowy standard o'er this fa-  
 voured clime:  
 There man was long the train-  
 bearer of slaves, 194  
 The mimic of surrounding misery,  
 The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,  
 The bloodhound of religion's hun-  
 gry zeal.  
 'Here now the human being stands  
 adorning  
 This loveliest earth with taintless  
 body and mind;  
 Blessed from his birth with all  
 bland impulses, 200  
 Which gently in his noble bosom  
 wake  
 All kindly passions and all pure de-  
 sires.  
 Him, still from hope to hope the  
 bliss pursuing

Which from the exhaustless lore of  
 human weal  
 Dawns on the virtuous mind, the  
 thoughts that rise 205  
 In time-destroying infiniteness, gift  
 With self-enshrined eternity, that  
 mocks  
 The unprevailing hoariness of age,  
 And man, once fleeting o'er the  
 transient scene  
 Swift as an unremembered vision,  
 stands 210  
 Immortal upon earth: no longer  
 now  
 He slays the lamb that looks him  
 in the face,  
 And horribly devours his mangled  
 flesh,  
 Which, still avenging Nature's  
 broken law,  
 Kindled all putrid humours in his  
 frame, 215  
 All evil passions, and all vain belief,  
 Hatred, despair, and loathing in  
 his mind,  
 The germs of misery, death, dis-  
 ease, and crime.  
 No longer now the wingèd habi-  
 tants,  
 That in the woods their sweet lives  
 sing away, 220  
 Flee from the form of man; but  
 gather round,  
 And prune their sunny feathers on  
 the hands  
 Which little children stretch in  
 friendly sport  
 Towards these dreadless partners  
 of their play.  
 All things are void of terror: Man  
 has lost 225  
 His terrible prerogative, and stands  
 An equal amidst equals: happiness  
 And science dawn though late upon  
 the earth;  
 Peace cheers the mind, health reno-  
 vates the frame;

Disease and pleasure cease to  
mingle here, 230  
Reason and passion cease to com-  
bat there;  
Whilst each unfettered o'er the  
earth extend  
Their all-subduing energies, and  
wield  
The sceptre of a vast dominion  
there;  
Whilst every shape and mode of  
matter lends 235  
Its force to the omnipotence of  
mind,  
Which from its dark mine drags the  
gem of truth  
To decorate its Paradise of peace.'

IX

'O HAPPY Earth! reality of  
Heaven!  
To which those restless souls that  
ceaselessly  
Throng through the human uni-  
verse, aspire;  
Thou consummation of all mortal  
hope!  
Thou glorious prize of blindly-  
working will! 5  
Whose rays, diffused throughout  
all space and time,  
Verge to one point and blend for  
ever there:  
Of purest spirits thou pure dwell-  
ing place! •  
Where care and sorrow, impotence  
and crime,  
Languor, disease, and ignorance  
dare not come: 10  
O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!  
'Genius has seen thee in her pas-  
sionate dreams,  
And dim forebodings of thy love-  
liness  
Haunting the human heart, have  
there entwined

Those rooted hopes of some sweet  
place of bliss 15  
Where friends and lovers meet to  
part no more.  
Thou art the end of all desire and  
will,  
The product of all action; and  
the souls  
That by the paths of an aspiring  
change  
Have reached thy haven of per-  
petual peace, 20  
There rest from the eternity of toil  
That framed the fabric of thy per-  
fectness.  
'Even Time, the conqueror, fled  
thee in his fear;  
That hoary giant, who, in lonely  
pride,  
So long had ruled the world, that  
nations fell, 25  
Beneath his silent footstep. Pyra-  
mids,  
That for millenniums had with-  
stood the tide  
Of human things, his storm-breath  
drove in sand  
Across that desert where their  
stones survived  
The name of him whose pride had  
heaped them there. 30  
Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp,  
Was but the mushroom of a sum-  
mer day,  
That his light-wingèd footstep  
pressed to dust:  
Time was the king of earth: all  
things gave way  
Before him, but the fixed and vir-  
tuous will, 35  
The sacred sympathies of soul and  
sense,  
That mocked his fury and pre-  
pared his fall.  
'Yet slow and gradual dawned the  
morn of love;

Long lay the clouds of darkness  
     o'er the scene,  
 Till from its native Heaven they  
     rolled away: 40  
 First, Crime triumphant o'er all  
     hope careered  
 Unblushing, undisguising, bold and  
     strong;  
 Whilst Falsehood, tricked in Vir-  
     tue's attributes,  
 Long sanctified all deeds of vice  
     and woe,  
 Till done by her own venomous  
     sting to death, 45  
 She left the moral world without  
     a law,  
 No longer fettering Passion's fear-  
     less wing,  
 Nor searing Reason with the brand  
     of God.  
 Then steadily the happy ferment  
     worked;  
 Reason was free; and wild though  
     Passion went 50  
 Through tangled glens and wood-  
     embosomed meads,  
 Gathering a garland of the strang-  
     est flowers,  
 Yet like the bee returning to her  
     queen,  
 She bound the sweetest on her  
     sister's brow,  
 Who meek and sober kissed the  
     sportive child, 55  
 No longer trembling at the broken  
     rod.  
 'Mild was the slow necessity of  
     death:  
 The tranquil spirit failed beneath  
     its grasp,  
 Without a groan, almost without  
     a fear,  
 Calm as a voyager to some distant  
     land, 60  
 And full of wonder, full of hope as  
     he.

The deadly germs of languor and  
     disease  
 Died in the human frame, and  
     Purity  
 Blessed with all gifts her earthly  
     worshippers.  
 How vigorous then the athletic  
     form of age! 65  
 How clear its open and unwrinkled  
     brow!  
 Where neither avarice, cunning,  
     pride, nor care,  
 Had stamped the seal of gray de-  
     formity  
 On all the mingling lineaments of  
     time.  
 How lovely the intrepid front of  
     youth! 70  
 Which meek-eyed courage decked  
     with freshest grace;  
 Courage of soul, that dreaded not  
     a name,  
 And elevated will, that journeyed  
     on  
 Through life's phantasmal scene in  
     fearlessness,  
 With virtue, love, and pleasure,  
     hand in hand. 75  
 'Then, that sweet bondage which  
     is Freedom's self,  
 And rivets with sensation's softest  
     tie  
 The kindred sympathies of human  
     souls,  
 Needed no<sup>o</sup> fetters of tyrannic  
     law: 79  
 Those delicate and timid impulses  
 In Nature's primal modesty arose,  
 And with undoubted confidence  
     disclosed  
 The growing longings of its dawn-  
     ing love,  
 Unchecked by dull and selfish  
     chastity,  
 That virtue of the cheaply vir-  
     tuous, 85

Who pride themselves in senseless-  
ness and frost.

No longer prostitution's venom'd  
bane

Poisoned the springs of happiness  
and life;

Woman and man, in confidence and  
love,

Equal and free and pure together  
trod 90

The mountain-paths of virtue,  
which no more

Were stained with blood from  
many a pilgrim's feet.

'Then, where, through distant  
ages, long in pride

The palace of the monarch-slave  
had mocked

Famine's faint groan, and Penury's  
silent tear, 95

A heap of crumbling ruins stood,  
and threw

Year after year their stones upon  
the field,

Wakening a lonely echo; and the  
leaves

Of the old thorn, that on the top-  
most tower

Usurped the royal ensign's gran-  
deur, shook 100

In the stern storm that swayed  
the topmost tower

And whispered strange tales in the  
Whirlwind's ear.

'Low through the lone cathedral's  
roofless aisles

The melancholy winds a death-  
dirge sung: 104

It were a sight of awfulness to see  
The works of faith and slavery, so

vast,  
So sumptuous, yet so perishing  
withal!

Even as the corpse that rests be-  
neath its wall.

A thousand mourners deck the  
pomp of death

To-day, the breathing marble glows  
above 110

To decorate its memory, and  
tongues

Are busy of its life: to-morrow,  
worms

In silence and in darkness seize  
their prey.

'Within the massy prison's moulder-  
ing courts,

Fearless and free the ruddy chil-  
dren played, 115

Weaving gay chaplets for their in-  
nocent brows

With the green ivy and the red  
wall-flower,

That mock the dungeon's unavail-  
ing gloom;

The ponderous chains, and grat-  
ings of strong iron,

There rusted amid heaps of broken  
stone 120

That mingled slowly with their  
native earth:

There the broad beam of day,  
which feebly once

Lighted the cheek of lean Cap-  
tivity

With a pale and sickly glare, then  
freely shone

On the pure smiles of infant play-  
fulness: 125

No more the shuddering voice of  
hoarse Despair

Pealed through the echoing vaults,  
but soothing notes

Of ivy-fingered winds and glad-  
some birds

And merriment were resonant  
around.

'These ruins soon left not a wreck  
behind: 130

Their elements, wide scattered o'er  
the globe,

To happier shapes were moulded,  
 and became  
 Ministrant to all blissful impulses:  
 Thus human things were perfected,  
 and earth,  
 Even as a child beneath its mother's  
 love, 135  
 Was strengthened in all excellence,  
 and grew  
 Fairer and nobler with each pass-  
 ing year.

'Now Time his dusky pennons o'er  
 the scene  
 Closes in steadfast darkness, and  
 the past  
 Fades from our charmèd sight. My  
 task is done: 140  
 Thy lore is learned. Earth's won-  
 ders are thine own,  
 With all the fear and all the hope  
 they bring.  
 My spells are passed: the present  
 now recurs.  
 Ah me! a pathless wilderness re-  
 mains  
 Yet unsubdued by man's reclaim-  
 ing hand. 145

'Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold  
 thy course,  
 Let virtue teach thee firmly to  
 pursue  
 The gradual paths of an aspiring  
 change:  
 For birth and life and death, and  
 that strange state  
 Before the naked soul has found its  
 home, 150  
 All tend to perfect happiness, and  
 urge  
 The restless wheels of being on their  
 way,  
 Whose flashing spokes, instinct  
 with infinite life,  
 Bicker and burn to gain their  
 destined goal:

For birth but wakes the spirit to  
 the sense 155  
 Of outward shows, whose unexpe-  
 rienced shape  
 New modes of passion to its frame  
 may lend;  
 Life is its state of action, and the  
 store  
 Of all events is aggregated there  
 That variegate the eternal uni-  
 verse; 160  
 Death is a gate of dreariness and  
 gloom,  
 That leads to azure isles and beam-  
 ing skies  
 And happy regions of eternal hope.  
 Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear  
 on:  
 Though storms may break the  
 primrose on its stalk, 165  
 Though frosts may blight the  
 freshness of its bloom,  
 Yet Spring's awakening breath will  
 woo the earth,  
 To feed with kindest dews its  
 favourite flower,  
 That blooms in mossy banks and  
 darksome glens,  
 Lighting the greenwood with its  
 sunny smile. 170

'Fear not then, Spirit, Death's dis-  
 robing hand,  
 So welcome when the tyrant is  
 awake  
 So welcome when the bigot's hell-  
 torch burns;  
 'Tis but the voyage of a darksome  
 hour,  
 The transient gulf-dream of a  
 startling sleep. 175  
 Death is no foe to Virtue: earth  
 has seen  
 Love's brightest roses on the scaf-  
 fold bloom,  
 Mingling with Freedom's fadeless  
 laurels there,

And presaging the truth of vi-  
sioned bliss.  
Are there not hopes within thee,  
which this scene . 180  
Of linked and gradual being has  
confirmed?  
Whose stings bade thy heart  
look further still,  
When, to the moonlight walk by  
Henry led,  
Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk  
of death?  
And wilt thou rudely tear them  
from thy breast, 185  
Listening supinely to a bigot's  
creed,  
Or tamely crouching to the tyrant's  
rod,  
Whose iron thongs are red with  
human gore?  
Never: but bravely bearing on, thy  
will  
Is destined an eternal war to wage  
With tyranny and falsehood, and  
uproot 191  
The germs of misery from the hu-  
man heart.  
Thine is the hand whose piety  
would soothe  
The thorny pillow of unhappy  
crime,  
Whose impotence an easy pardon  
gains, 195  
Watching its wanderings as a  
friend's disease:  
Thine is the brow whose mildness  
would defy  
Its fiercest rage, and brave its  
sternest will,  
When fenced by power and master  
of the world.  
Thou art sincere and good; of reso-  
lute mind, 200  
Free from heart-withering custom's  
cold control,  
Of passion lofty, pure and unsub-  
dued.

Earth's pride and meanness could  
not vanquish thee,  
And therefore art thou worthy of  
the boon  
Which thou hast now received:  
Virtue shall keep 205  
Thy footsteps in the path that  
thou hast trod,  
And many days of beaming hope  
shall bless  
Thy spotless life of sweet and  
sacred love.  
Go, happy one, and give that  
bosom joy  
Whose sleepless spirit waits to  
catch 210  
Light, life and rapture from thy  
smile.'  
  
The Fairy waves her wand of  
charm.  
Speechless with bliss the Spirit  
mounts the car,  
That rolled beside the battle-  
ment,  
Bending her beamy eyes in thank-  
fulness. 215  
Again the enchanted steeds were  
yoked,  
Again the burning wheels inflame  
The steep descent of Heaven's un-  
trodden way.  
Fast and far the chariot flew:  
The vast and fiery globes that  
rolled 220  
Around the Fairy's palace-gate  
Lessened by slow degrees and soon  
appeared  
Such tiny twinklers as the planet  
orbs  
That there attendant on the solar  
power  
With borrowed light pursued their  
narrower way. 225  
  
Earth floated then below:  
The chariot paused a moment  
there;

The Spirit then descended:  
 The restless coursers pawed the  
     ungenial soil,  
 Snuffed the gross air, and then,  
     their errand done, 230  
 Unfurled their pinions to the winds  
     of Heaven.

The Body and the Soul united  
     then,  
 A gentle start convulsed Ianthé's  
     frame:

Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;  
 Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs  
     remained: 235  
 She looked around in wonder and  
     beheld  
 Henry, who kneeled in silence by  
     her couch,  
 Watching her sleep with looks of  
     speechless love,  
 And the bright beaming stars  
 That through the casement  
     shone. 240

### NOTE ON QUEEN MAB, BY MRS. SHELLEY

SHELLEY was eighteen when he wrote *Queen Mab*; he never published it. When it was written, he had come to the decision that he was too young to be a 'judge of controversies'; and he was desirous of acquiring 'that sobriety of spirit which is the characteristic of true heroism.' But he never doubted the truth or utility of his opinions; and, in printing and privately distributing *Queen Mab*, he believed that he should further their dissemination, without occasioning the mischief either to others or himself that might arise from publication. It is doubtful whether he would himself have admitted it into a collection of his works. His severe classical taste, refined by the constant study of the Greek poets, might have discovered defects that escape the ordinary reader; and the change his opinions underwent in many points would have prevented him from putting forth the speculations of his boyish days. But the poem is too beautiful in itself, and far too remarkable as the production of a boy of eighteen, to allow of its being passed over: besides that, having been frequently reprinted, the omission would be vain. In the former edition certain portions were left out, as shocking the general reader from the violence of their attack on religion. I myself had a painful feeling that such erasures might be looked upon as a mark of disrespect towards the author, and am glad to have the opportunity of restoring them.

A series of articles was published in the *New Monthly Magazine* during the autumn of the year 1832, written by a man of great talent, a fellow-collegian and warm friend of Shelley: they describe admirably the state of his mind during his collegiate life. Inspired with ardour for the acquisition of knowledge, endowed with the keenest sensibility and with the fortitude of a martyr, Shelley came among his fellow-creatures, congregated for the purposes of education, like a spirit from another sphere; too delicately organized for the rough treatment man uses towards man, especially in the season of youth, and too resolute in



carrying out his own sense of good and justice, not to become a victim. To a devoted attachment to those he loved he added a determined resistance to oppression. Refusing to fag at Eton, he was treated with revolting cruelty by masters and boys: this roused instead of taming his spirit, and he rejected the duty of obedience when it was enforced by menaces and punishment. To aversion to the society of his fellow-creatures, such as he found them when collected together in societies, where one egged-on the other to acts of tyranny, was joined the deepest sympathy and compassion; while the attachment he felt for individuals, and the admiration with which he regarded their powers and their virtues, led him to entertain a high opinion of the perfectibility of human nature; and he believed that all could reach the highest grade of moral improvement, did not the customs and prejudices of society foster evil passions and excuse evil actions.

The oppression which, trembling at every nerve yet resolute to heroism, it was his ill-fortune to encounter at school and at college, led him to dissent in all things from those whose arguments were blows, whose faith appeared to engender blame and hatred. 'During my existence,' he wrote to a friend in 1812, 'I have incessantly speculated, thought, and read.' His readings were not always well chosen; among them were the works of the French philosophers: as far as metaphysical argument went, he temporarily became a convert. At the same time, it was the cardinal article of his faith that, if men were but taught and induced to treat their fellows with love, charity, and equal rights, this earth would realize paradise. He looked upon religion, as it is professed, and above all practised, as hostile instead of friendly to the cultivation of those virtues which would make men brothers.

Can this be wondered at? At the age of seventeen, fragile in health and frame, of the purest habits in morals, full of devoted generosity and universal kindness, glowing with ardour to attain wisdom, resolved at every personal sacrifice to do right, burning with a desire for affection and sympathy,—he was treated as a reprobate, cast forth as a criminal.

The cause was that he was sincere; that he believed the opinions which he entertained to be true. And he loved truth with a martyr's love; he was ready to sacrifice station and fortune, and his dearest affections, at its shrine. The sacrifice was demanded from, and made by, a youth of seventeen. It is a singular fact in the history of society in the civilized nations of modern times that no false step is so irretrievable as one made in early youth. Older men, it is true, when they oppose their fellows and transgress ordinary rules, carry a certain prudence or hypocrisy as a shield along with them. But youth is rash; nor can it imagine, while asserting what it believes to be true, and doing what it believes to be right, that it should be denounced as vicious, and pursued as a criminal.

Shelley possessed a quality of mind which experience has shown me to be of the rarest occurrence among human beings: this was his *unworldliness*. The usual motives that rule men, prospects of present or future

advantage, the rank and fortune of those around, the taunts and censures, or the praise, of those who were hostile to him, had no influence whatever over his actions, and apparently none over his thoughts. It is difficult even to express the simplicity and directness of purpose that adorned him. Some few might be found in the history of mankind, and some one at least among his own friends, equally disinterested and scornful, even to severe personal sacrifices, of every baser motive. But no one, I believe, ever joined this noble but passive virtue to equal active endeavours for the benefit of his friends and mankind in general, and to equal power to produce the advantages he desired. The world's brightest gauds and its most solid advantages were of no worth in his eyes, when compared to the cause of what he considered truth, and the good of his fellow-creatures. Born in a position which, to his inexperienced mind, afforded the greatest facilities to practise the tenets he espoused, he boldly declared the use he would make of fortune and station, and enjoyed the belief that he should materially benefit his fellow-creatures by his actions; while, conscious of surpassing powers of reason and imagination, it is not strange that he should, even while so young, have believed that his written thoughts would tend to disseminate opinions which he believed conducive to the happiness of the human race.

If man were a creature devoid of passion, he might have said and done all this with quietness. But he was too enthusiastic, and too full of hatred of all the ills he witnessed, not to scorn danger. Various disappointments tortured, but could not tame, his soul. The more enmity he met, the more earnestly he became attached to his peculiar views, and hostile to those of the men who persecuted him.

He was animated to greater zeal by compassion for his fellow-creatures. His sympathy was excited by the misery with which the world is burning. He witnessed the sufferings of the poor, and was aware of the evils of ignorance. He desired to induce every rich man to despoil himself of superfluity, and to create a brotherhood of property and service, and was ready to be the first to lay down the advantages of his birth. He was of too uncompromising a disposition to join any party. He did not in his youth look forward to gradual improvement: nay, in those days of intolerance, now almost forgotten, it seemed as easy to look forward to the sort of millennium of freedom and brotherhood which he thought the proper state of mankind as to the present reign of moderation and improvement. Ill-health made him believe that his race would soon be run; that a year or two was all he had of life. He desired that these years should be useful and illustrious. He saw, in a fervent call on his fellow-creatures to share alike the blessings of the creation, to love and serve each other, the noblest work that life and time permitted him. In this spirit he composed *Queen Mab*.

He was a lover of the wonderful and wild in literature, but had not fostered these tastes at their genuine sources—the romances and chivalry of the middle ages—but in the perusal of such German works as were current in those days. Under the influence of these he, at the age of

fifteen, wrote two short prose romances of slender merit. The sentiments and language were exaggerated, the composition imitative and poor. He wrote also a poem on the subject of Ahasuerus—being led to it by a German fragment he picked up, dirty and torn, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. This fell afterwards into other hands, and was considerably altered before it was printed. Our earlier English poetry was almost unknown to him. The love and knowledge of Nature developed by Wordsworth—the lofty melody and mysterious beauty of Coleridge's poetry—and the wild fantastic machinery and gorgeous scenery adopted by Southey—composed his favourite reading; the rhythm of *Queen Mab* was founded on that of *Thalaba*, and the first few lines bear a striking resemblance in spirit, though not in idea, to the opening of that poem. His fertile imagination, and ear tuned to the finest sense of harmony, preserved him from imitation. Another of his favourite books was the poem of *Gebir* by Walter Savage Landor. From his boyhood he had a wonderful facility of versification, which he carried into another language; and his Latin school-verses were composed with an ease and correctness that procured for him prizes, and caused him to be resorted to by all his friends for help. He was, at the period of writing *Queen Mab*, a great traveller within the limits of England, Scotland, and Ireland. His time was spent among the loveliest scenes of these countries. Mountain and lake and forest were his home; the phenomena of Nature were his favourite study. He loved to inquire into their causes, and was addicted to pursuits of natural philosophy and chemistry, as far as they could be carried on as an amusement. These tastes gave truth and vivacity to his descriptions, and warmed his soul with that deep admiration for the wonders of Nature which constant association with her inspired.

He never intended to publish *Queen Mab* as it stands; but a few years after, when printing *Alastor*, he extracted a small portion which he entitled *The Daemon of the World*. In this he changed somewhat the versification, and made other alterations scarcely to be called improvements.

Some years after, when in Italy, a bookseller published an edition of *Queen Mab* as it originally stood. Shelley was hastily written to by his friends, under the idea that, deeply injurious as the mere distribution of the poem had proved, the publication might awaken fresh persecutions. At the suggestion of these friends he wrote a letter on the subject, printed in the *Examiner* newspaper—with which I close this history of his earliest work.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'EXAMINER.'

'SIR,

'Having heard that a poem entitled *Queen Mab* has been surreptitiously published in London, and that legal proceedings have been instituted against the publisher, I request the favour of your insertion of the following explanation of the affair, as it relates to me.

'A poem entitled *Queen Mab* was written by me at the age of eighteen,

I daresay in a sufficiently intemperate spirit—but even then was not intended for publication, and a few copies only were struck off, to be distributed among my personal friends. I have not seen this production for several years. I doubt not but that it is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition; and that, in all that concerns moral and political speculation, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine, it is still more crude and immature. I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression; and I regret this publication, not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear it is better fitted to injure than to serve the sacred cause of freedom. I have directed my solicitor to apply to Chancery for an injunction to restrain the sale; but, after the precedent of Mr. Southey's *Wat Tyler* (a poem written, I believe, at the same age, and with the same unreflecting enthusiasm), with little hope of success.

'Whilst I exonerate myself from all share in having divulged opinions hostile to existing sanctions, under the form, whatever it may be, which they assume in this poem, it is scarcely necessary for me to protest against the system of inculcating the truth of Christianity or the excellence of Monarchy, however true or however excellent they may be, by such equivocal arguments as confiscation and imprisonment, and invective and slander, and the insolent violation of the most sacred ties of Nature and society.

'SIR,

'I am your obliged and obedient servant,

'Pisa, June 22, 1821.'

'PERCY B. SHELLEY.

## VERSES ON A CAT

### I

A CAT in distress,  
Nothing more, nor less;  
Good folks, I must faithfully tell ye,  
As I am a sinner,  
It waits for some dinner 5  
To stuff out its own little belly.

### II

You would not easily guess  
All the modes of distress  
Which torture the tenants of earth;  
And the various evils, 10  
Which like so many devils,  
Attend the poor souls from their  
birth.

### III

Some a living require,  
And others desire

An old fellow out of the way; 15  
And which is the best  
I leave to be guessed,  
For I cannot pretend to say.

### IV

One wants society,  
Another variety, 20  
Others a tranquil life;  
Some want food,  
Others, as good,  
Only want a wife.

### V

But this poor little cat 25  
Only wanted a rat,  
To stuff out its own little maw;  
And it were as good  
Some people had such food,  
To make them *hold their jaw!* 30

## FRAGMENT: OMENS

HARK! the owlet flaps his wings  
 In the pathless dell beneath;  
 Hark! 'tis the night-raven sings  
 Tidings of approaching death.

## EPITAPHIUM

[LATIN VERSION OF THE EPITAPH  
 IN GRAY'S ELEGY.]

## I

Hic sinu fessum caput hospitali  
 Cespitis dormit juvenis, nec illi  
 Fata ridebant, popularis ille  
 Nescius auræ.

## II

Musa non vultu genus arroganti 5  
 Rustica natum grege despicata,  
 Et suum tristis puerum notavit  
 Sollicitudo.

## III

Indoles illi bene larga, pectus 10  
 Veritas sedem sibi vindicavit,  
 Et pari tantis meritis beavit  
 Munere coelum.

## IV

Omne quod moestis habuit miserto  
 Corde largivit lacrimam, recepit  
 Omne quod coelo voluit, fidelis 15  
 Pectus amici.

## V

Longius sed tu fuge curiosus  
 Caeteras laudes fuge suspicari,  
 Caeteras culpas fuge velle tractas  
 Sede tremenda. 20

## VI

Spe tremescentes recubant in illa  
 Sede virtutes pariterque culpae,  
 In sui Patris gremio, tremenda  
 Sede Deique.

## IN HOROLOGIUM

INTER marmoreas Leonoræ pen-  
 dula colles

Fortunata nimis Machina dicit  
 horas.

Quas *manibus* premit illa duas  
 insensa papillas  
 Cur mihi sit *digito* tangere, amata,  
 nefas?

## A DIALOGUE

*Death.*

FOR my dagger is bathed in the  
 blood of the brave,  
 I come, care-worn tenant of life,  
 from the grave,  
 Where Innocence sleeps 'neath the  
 peace-giving sod,  
 And the good cease to tremble at  
 Tyranny's nod;  
 I offer a calm habitation to thee,—  
 Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slum-  
 ber with me? 6  
 My mansion is damp, cold silence  
 is there,  
 But it lulls in oblivion the fiends of  
 despair;  
 Not a groan of regret, not a sigh,  
 not a breath,  
 Dares dispute with grim Silence the  
 empire of Death. 10  
 I offer a calm habitation to thee,—  
 Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slum-  
 ber with me?

*Mortal.*

Mine eyelids are heavy; my soul  
 seeks repose,  
 It longs in thy cells to embosom its  
 woes,  
 It longs in thy cells to deposit its  
 load, 15  
 Where no longer the scorpions of  
 Perfidy goad,—  
 Where the phantoms of Prejudice  
 vanish away,  
 And Bigotry's bloodhounds lose  
 scent of their prey.  
 Yet tell me, dark Death, when  
 thine empire is o'er,

What awaits on Futurity's mist-  
covered shore? 20

*Death.*

Cease, cease, wayward Mortal! I  
dare not unveil  
The shadows that float o'er Eter-  
nity's vale;  
Nought waits for the good but a  
spirit of Love,  
That will hail their blest advent to  
regions above.  
For Love, Mortal, gleams through  
the gloom of my sway, 25  
And the shades which surround me  
fly fast at its ray.  
Hast thou loved?—Then depart  
from these regions of hate,  
And in slumber with me blunt the  
arrows of fate.  
I offer a calm habitation to  
thee,—  
Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slum-  
ber with me? 30

*Mortal.*

Oh! sweet is thy slumber! oh!  
sweet is the ray  
Which after thy night introduces  
the day;  
How concealed, how persuasive,  
self-interest's breath,  
Though it floats to mine ear from  
the bosom of Death!  
I hoped that I quite was forgotten  
by all, 35  
Yet a lingering friend might be  
grieved at my fall,  
And duty forbids, though I lan-  
guish to die,  
When departure might heave Vir-  
tue's breast with a sigh.  
O Death! O my friend! snatch this  
form to thy shrine,  
And I fear, dear destroyer, I shall  
not repine. 40

TO THE MOONBEAM

I

MOONBEAM, leave the shadowy  
vale,  
To bathe this burning brow.  
Moonbeam, why art thou so pale,  
As thou walkest o'er the dewy  
dale,  
Where humble wild-flowers  
grow? 5  
Is it to mimic me?  
But that can never be;  
For thine orb is bright,  
And the clouds are light,  
That at intervals shadow the star-  
studded night. 10

II

Now all is deathly still on earth;  
Nature's tired frame reposes;  
And, ere the golden morning's  
birth  
Its radiant hues discloses,  
Flies forth its balmy  
breath. 15  
But mine is the midnight  
of Death,  
And Nature's morn  
To my bosom forlorn  
Brings but a gloomier night, im-  
plants a deadlier thorn.

III

Wretch! Suppress the glare of  
madness 20  
Struggling in thine haggard  
eye,  
For the keenest throb of sadness,  
Pale Despair's most sickening  
sigh,  
Is but to mimic me;  
And this must ever be, 25  
When the twilight of care,  
And the night of despair,  
Seem in my breast but joys to the  
pangs that rankle there.

## THE SOLITARY

## I

DAR'ST thou amid the varied multi-  
tude

To live alone, an isolated thing?

To see the busy beings round  
thee spring,

And care for none; in thy calm  
solitude,

A flower that scarce breathes in the  
desert rude 5

To Zephyr's passing wing?

## II

Not the swart Pariah in some In-  
dian grove,

Lone, lean, and hunted by his  
brother's hate,

Hath drunk so deep the cup of  
bitter fate

As that poor wretch who cannot,  
cannot love: 10

He bears a load which nothing can  
remove,

A killing, withering weight.

## III

He smiles—'tis sorrow's deadliest  
mockery;

He speaks—the cold words flow  
not from his soul;

He acts like others, drains the  
genial bowl,— 15

Yet, yet he longs—although he  
fears—to die;

He pants to reach what yet he  
seems to fly,

Dull life's extremest goal.

## TO DEATH

DEATH! where is thy victory?

To triumph whilst I die,

To triumph whilst thine ebon  
wing

Enfolds my shuddering soul?

O Death! where is thy sting? 5

Not when the tides of murder  
roll,

When nations groan, that kings  
may bask in bliss,

Death! canst thou boast a victory  
such as this—

When in his hour of pomp and  
power

His blow the mightiest mur-  
derer gave, 10

Mid Nature's cries the sacrifice  
Of millions to glut the grave:

When sunk the Tyrant Desolation's  
slave;

Or Freedom's life-blood streamed  
upon thy shrine;

Stern Tyrant, couldst thou boast a  
victory such as mine? 15

To know in dissolution's void

That mortals' baubles sunk  
decay;

That everything, but Love, de-  
stroyed

Must perish with its kindred  
clay,—

Perish Ambition's crown, 20

Perish her sceptred sway;

From Death's pale front fades  
Pride's fastidious frown.

In Death's damp vault the lurid  
fires decay,

That Envy lights at heaven-born  
Virtue's beam—

That all the cares subside, 25

Which lurk beneath the tide

Of life's unquiet stream;—

Yes! this is victory!

And on yon rock, whose dark form  
glooms the sky,

To stretch these pale limbs, when  
the soul is fled; 30

To baffle the lean passions of  
their prey,

To sleep within the palace of the  
dead!

Oh! not the King, around whose  
dazzling throne

His countless courtiers mock the  
words they say,

Triumphs amid the bud of glory  
blown, 35

As I in this cold bed, and faint  
 expiring groan!

Tremble, ye proud, whose grandeur  
 mocks the woe

Which props the column of un-  
 natural state!

You the plainings, faint and  
 low,

From Misery's tortured soul  
 that flow, 40

Shall usher to your fate.

Tremble, ye conquerors, at whose  
 fell command

The war-fiend riots o'er a peaceful  
 land!

You Desolation's gory throng  
 Shall bear from Victory

along 45

To that mysterious strand.

. . . . .

### LOVE'S ROSE

#### I

HOPES, that swell in youthful  
 breasts,

Live not through the waste of  
 time!

Love's rose a host of thorns invests;

Cold, ungenial is the clime,

Where its honours blow. 5

Youth says, 'The purple flowers are  
 mine,'

Which die the while they glow.

#### II

Dear the boon to Fancy given,

Retracted whilst it's granted:

Sweet the rose which lives in  
 Heaven, 10

Although on earth 'tis planted,

Where its honours blow,

While by earth's slaves the leaves  
 are riven

Which die the while they glow.

#### III

Age cannot Love destroy, 15

But perfidy can blast the flower,

Even when in most unwary hour

It blooms in Fancy's bower.

Age cannot Love destroy,

But perfidy can rend the shrine 20

In which its vermeil splendours  
 shine.

### EYES: A FRAGMENT

How eloquent are eyes!

Not the rapt poet's frenzied lay

When the soul's wildest feelings  
 stray

Can speak so well as they.

How eloquent are eyes! 5

Not music's most impassioned note

On which Love's warmest fervours  
 float

Like them bids rapture rise.

Love, look thus again,—

That your look may light a waste  
 of years, 10

Darting the beam that conquers  
 cares

Through the cold shower of  
 tears.

Love, look thus again!

. . . . .

### ORIGINAL POETRY

BY VICTOR AND CAZIRE

*A Person complained that whenever he began to write, he never could arrange his ideas in grammatical order. Which occasion suggested the idea of the following lines:*

#### I

HERE I sit with my paper, my pen  
 and my ink,

First of this thing, and that thing,  
 and t'other thing think;

Then my thoughts come so pell-  
 mell all into my mind,



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>That the sense or the subject I<br/>never can find:<br/>This word is wrong placed,—no<br/>regard to the sense, 5<br/>The present and future, instead of<br/>past tense,<br/>Then my grammar I want; O dear!<br/>what a bore,<br/>I think I shall never attempt to<br/>write more,<br/>With patience I then my thoughts<br/>must arraign,<br/>Have them all in due order like<br/>mutes in a train, 10<br/>Like them too must wait in due<br/>patience and thought,<br/>Or else my fine works will all come<br/>to nought.<br/>My wit too 's so copious, it flows<br/>like a river,<br/>But disperses its waters on black<br/>and white never;<br/>Like smoke it appears independent<br/>and free, 15<br/>But ah luckless smoke! it all passes<br/>like thee—<br/>Then at length all my patience en-<br/>tirely lost,<br/>My paper and pens in the fire are<br/>tossed;<br/>But come, try again—you must<br/>never despair,<br/>Our Murray's or Entick's are not<br/>all so rare, 20<br/>Implore their assistance—they'll<br/>come to your aid,<br/>Perform all your business without<br/>being paid,<br/>They'll tell you the present tense,<br/>future and past,<br/>Which should come first, and which<br/>should come last,<br/>This Murray will do—then to En-<br/>tick repair, 25<br/>To find out the meaning of any<br/>word rare.</p> | <p>This they friendly will tell, and<br/>ne'er make you blush,<br/>With a jeering look, taunt, or an<br/>O fie! tush!<br/>Then straight all your thoughts in<br/>black and white put,<br/>Not minding the if's, the be's, and<br/>the but, 30<br/>Then read it all over, see how it<br/>will run,<br/>How answers the wit, the retort,<br/>and the pun,<br/>Your writings may then with old<br/>Socrates vie,<br/>May on the same shelf with Demos-<br/>thenes lie,<br/>May as Junius be sharp, or as Plato<br/>be sage, 35<br/>The pattern or satire to all of the<br/>age;<br/>But stop—a mad author I mean not<br/>to turn,<br/>Nor with thirst of applause does my<br/>heated brain burn,<br/>Sufficient that sense, wit, and gram-<br/>mar combined,<br/>My letters may make some slight<br/>food for the mind; 40<br/>That my thoughts to my friends I<br/>may freely impart,<br/>In all the warm language that flows<br/>from the heart.<br/>Hark! futurity calls! it loudly<br/>complains,<br/>It bids me step forward and just<br/>hold the reins,<br/>My excuse shall be humble, and<br/>faithful, and true, 45<br/>Such as I fear can be made but by<br/>few—<br/>Of writers this age has abundance<br/>and plenty,<br/>Three score and a thousand, two<br/>millions and twenty,<br/>Three score of them wits who all<br/>sharply vie,</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



Whose sharp little arrow struck  
     right on his heart,  
 Scold poor innocent Cupid for mis-  
     chievous ways,  
 He knows not how much to laud  
     forth her praise, 20  
 That he neither eats, drinks or  
     sleeps for her sake,  
 And hopes her hard heart some  
     compassion will take,  
 A refusal would kill him, so des-  
     perate his flame,  
 But he fears, for he knows she is  
     not common game,  
 Then praises her sense, wit, discern-  
     ment and grace, 25  
 He's not one that's caught by a sly  
     looking face,  
 Yet that's *too* divine—such a black  
     sparkling eye,  
 At the bare glance of which near a  
     thousand will die;  
 Thus runs he on meaning but one  
     word in ten,  
 More than is meant by most such  
     kind of men, 30  
 For they're all alike, take them one  
     with another,  
 Begging pardon—with the excep-  
     tion of my brother.  
 Of the drawings you mention much  
     praise I have heard,  
 Most opinion 's the same, with the  
     difference of word,  
 Some get a good name by the voice  
     of the crowd, 35  
 Whilst to poor humble merit small  
     praise is allowed,  
 As in parliament votes, so in pic-  
     tures a name,  
 Oft determines a fate at the altar  
     of fame.—  
 So on Friday this City's gay vortex  
     you quit,  
 And no longer with Doctors and  
     Johnny cats sit— 40

Now your parcel's arrived —  
     [Bysshe's] letter shall go,  
 I hope all your joy mayn't be  
     turned into woe,  
 Experience will tell you that pleas-  
     ure is vain,  
 When it promises sunshine how  
     often comes rain.  
 So when to fond hope every bless-  
     ing is nigh, 45  
 How oft when we smile it is  
     checked with a sigh,  
 When Hope, gay deceiver, in pleas-  
     ure is dressed,  
 How oft comes a stroke that may  
     rob us of rest.  
 When we think ourselves safe, and  
     the goal near at hand,  
 Like a vessel just landing, we're  
     wrecked near the strand, 50  
 And though memory forever the  
     sharp pang must feel,  
 'Tis our duty to bear, and our hard-  
     ship to steel—  
 May misfortunes dear Girl, ne'er  
     thy happiness cloy,  
 May the days glide in peace, love,  
     comfort and joy,  
 May thy tears with soft pity for  
     other woes flow, 55  
 Woes, which thy tender heart  
     never may know,  
 For hardships our own, God has  
     taught us to bear,  
 Though sympathy's soul to a friend  
     drops a tear.  
 Oh dear! what sentimental stuff  
     have I written,  
 Only fit to tear up and play with a  
     kitten. 60  
 What sober reflections in the midst  
     of this letter!  
 Jocularly sure would have suited  
     much better;  
 But there are exceptions to all com-  
     mon rules,

For this is a truth by all boys  
 learned at schools.  
 Now adieu my dear — [Hattie]  
 I'm sure I must tire, 65  
 For if I do, you may throw it into  
 the fire,  
 So accept the best love of your cou-  
 sin and friend,  
 Which brings this nonsensical  
 rhyme to an end.

*April 30, 1810.*

### III. SONG

COLD, cold is the blast when De-  
 cember is howling,  
 Cold are the damps on a dying  
 man's brow,—  
 Stern are the seas when the wild  
 waves are rolling,  
 And sad is the grave where a  
 loved one lies low;  
 But colder is scorn from the being  
 who loved thee, 5  
 More stern is the sneer from the  
 friend who has proved thee,  
 More sad are the tears when their  
 sorrows have moved thee,  
 Which mixed with groans, an-  
 guish and wild madness  
 flow—  
 And ah! poor — has felt all this  
 horror,  
 Full long the fallen victim con-  
 tended with fate: 10  
 'Till a destitute outcast abandoned  
 to sorrow,  
 She sought her babe's food at her  
 ruiner's gate—  
 Another had charmed the remorse-  
 less betrayer,  
 He turned laughing aside from her  
 moans and her prayer,  
 She said nothing, but wringing the  
 wet from her hair, 15  
 Crossed the dark mountain side,  
 though the hour it was late.  
 'Twas on the wild height of the  
 dark Penmanmawr,

That the form of the wasted —  
 reclined;  
 She shrieked to the ravens that  
 croaked from afar,  
 And she sighed to the gusts of  
 the wild sweeping wind.—  
 'I call not yon rocks where the  
 thunder peals rattle, 21  
 I call not yon clouds where the  
 elements battle,  
 But thee, cruel — I call thee  
 unkind!'

Then she wreathed in her hair the  
 wild flowers of the moun-  
 tain,  
 And deliriously laughing, a gar-  
 land entwined, 25  
 She bedewed it with tears, then she  
 hung o'er the fountain,  
 And leaving it, cast it a prey  
 to the wind.  
 'Ah! go,' she exclaimed, 'when the  
 tempest is yelling,  
 'Tis unkind to be cast on the sea  
 that is swelling,  
 But I left, a pitiless outcast, my  
 dwelling, 30  
 My garments are torn, so they  
 say is my mind—'  
 Not long lived —, but over her  
 grave  
 Waved the desolate form of a  
 storm-blasted yew,  
 Around it no demons or ghosts dare  
 to rave,  
 But spirits of peace steep her  
 slumbers in dew. 35  
 Then stay thy swift steps mid the  
 dark mountain heather,  
 Though chill blow the wind and  
 severe is the weather,  
 For perfidy, traveller! cannot be-  
 reave her,  
 Of the tears, to the tombs of the  
 innocent due.—

*JULY, 1810.*

## IV. SONG

COME [Harriet]! sweet is the hour,  
Soft Zephyrs breathe gently  
around,

The anemone's night-boding flower,  
Has sunk its pale head on the  
ground.

'Tis thus the world's keenness hath  
torn. 5

Some mild heart that expands  
to its blast,

'Tis thus that the wretched for-  
lorn,

Sinks poor and neglected at  
last.—

The world with its keenness and  
woe,

Has no charms or attraction for  
me, 10

Its unkindness with grief has laid  
low,

The heart which is faithful to  
thee.

The high trees that wave past the  
moon,

As I walk in their umbrage with  
you,

All declare I must part with you  
soon, 15

Al! bid you a tender adieu!—

Then [Harriet]! dearest farewell,  
You and I love, may ne'er meet  
again;

These woods and these meadows  
can tell

How soft and how sweet was the  
strain.— 20

APRIL, 1810.

## V. SONG

## DESPAIR

Ask not the pallid stranger's woe,  
With beating heart and throb-  
bing breast,

Whose step is faltering, weak, and  
slow,

As though the body needed  
rest.—

Whose 'wilder'd eye no object  
meets, 5

Nor cares to ken a friendly  
glance,

With silent grief his bosom beats,—  
Now fixed, as in a deathlike  
trance.

Who looks around with fearful eye,  
And shuns all converse with  
mankind, 10

As though some one his griefs  
might spy,

And soothe them with a kindred  
mind.

A friend or foe to him the same,  
He looks on each with equal eye;

The difference lies but in the  
name, 15

To none for comfort can he fly.—

'Twas deep despair, and sorrow's  
trace,

To him too keenly given,  
Whose memory, time could not ef-  
face—

His peace was lodged in  
Heaven.— 20

He looks on all this world be-  
stows,

The pride and pomp of power.  
As trifles best for pageant shows  
Which vanish in an hour.

When torn is dear affection's tie,  
Sinks the soft heart full low; 26

It leaves without a parting sigh,  
All that these realms bestow.

JUNE, 1810.

## VI. SONG

## SORROW

To me this world's a dreary blank,  
All hopes in life are gone and  
fled, 1

My high strung energies are sank,  
And all my blissful hopes lie  
dead.—

The world once smiling to my  
view,  
5  
Showed scenes of endless bliss  
and joy;  
The world I then but little knew,  
Ah! little knew how pleasures  
cloy;

All then was jocund, all was gay,  
No thought beyond the present  
hour,  
10  
I danced in pleasure's fading ray,  
Fading alas! as drooping flower.

Nor do the heedless in the throng,  
One thought beyond the morrow  
give[,]  
They court the feast, the dance,  
the song,  
15  
Nor think how short their time  
to live.

The heart that bears deep sorrow's  
trace,  
What earthly comfort can con-  
sole,  
It drags a dull and lengthened  
pace,  
'Till friendly death its woes en-  
roll.—  
20

The sunken cheek, the humid eyes,  
E'en better than the tongue can  
tell;  
In whose sad breast deep sorrow  
lies,  
Where memory's rankling traces  
dwell.—

The rising tear, the stifled sigh, 25  
A mind but ill at ease display,  
Like blackening clouds in stormy  
sky,  
Where fiercely vivid lightnings  
play.

Thus when souls' energy is dead,  
When sorrow dims each earthly  
view,  
30

When every fairy hope is fled,  
We bid ungrateful world adieu.  
AUGUST, 1810.

## VII. SONG

### HOPE

AND said I that all hope was fled,  
That sorrow and despair were  
mine,  
That each enthusiast wish was  
dead,  
Had sank beneath pale Misery's  
shrine.—

Seest thou the sunbeam's yellow  
glow,  
5  
That robes with liquid streams  
of light;  
Yon distant Mountain's craggy  
brow.  
And shows the rocks so fair,—  
so bright ——

Tis thus sweet expectation's ray,  
In softer view shows distant  
hours,  
10  
And portrays each succeeding day,  
As dressed in fairer, brighter  
flowers,—

The vermeil tinted flowers that  
blossom;  
Are frozen but to bud anew,  
Then sweet deceiver calm my  
bosom,  
15  
Although thy visions be not  
true,—

Yet true they are,—and I'll believe,  
Thy whisperings soft of love and  
peace,  
God never made thee to deceive,  
'Tis sin that bade thy empire  
cease.  
20

Yet though despair my life should  
gloom,  
Though horror should around me  
close,  
With those I love, beyond the  
tomb,  
Hope shows a balm for all my  
woes.

AUGUST, 1810.

## VIII. SONG

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

OH! what is the gain of restless  
care,  
And what is ambitious treasure?  
And what are the joys that the  
modish share,  
In their sickly haunts of pleas-  
sure?

My husband's repast with delight  
I spread, 5

What though 'tis but rustic fare,  
May each guardian angel protect  
his shed,

May contentment and quiet be  
there.

And may I support my husband's  
years,

May I soothe his dying pain, 10  
And then may I dry my fast fall-  
ing tears,

And meet him in Heaven again.

JULY, 1810.

## IX. SONG

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

AH! grasp the dire dagger and  
couch the fell spear,

If vengeance and death to thy  
bosom be dear,

The dastard shall perish, death's  
torment shall prove,

For fate and revenge are decreed  
from above.

Ah! where is the hero, whose  
nerves strung by youth, 5  
Will defend the firm cause of jus-  
tice and truth;

With insatiate desire whose bosom  
shall swell,

To give up the oppressor to judge-  
ment and Hell—

For him shall the fair one twine  
chaplets of bays,

To him shall each warrior give  
merited praise, 10

And triumphant returned from the  
clangour of arms,

He shall find his reward in his  
loved maiden's charms.

In ecstatic confusion the warrior  
shall sip,

The kisses that glow on his love's  
dewy lip,

And mutual, eternal, embraces shall  
prove, 15

The rewards of the brave are the  
transports of love.

OCTOBER, 1809.

## X

## THE IRISHMAN'S SONG

THE stars may dissolve, and the  
fountain of light

May sink into ne'er ending chaos  
and night,

Our mansions must fall, and earth  
vanish away,

But thy courage O Erin! may  
never decay.

See! the wide wasting ruin extends  
all around, 5

Our ancestors' dwellings lie sunk  
on the ground,

Our foes ride in triumph through-  
out our domains,

And our mightiest heroes lie  
stretched on the plains.

Ah! dead is the harp which was  
 wont to give pleasure,  
 Ah! sunk is our sweet country's  
 rapturous measure, 10  
 But the war note is waked, and the  
 clangour of spears,  
 The dread yell of Sloghan yet  
 sounds in our ears.  
 Ah! where are the heroes! tri-  
 umphant in death,  
 Convulsed they recline on the  
 blood sprinkled heath,  
 Or the yelling ghosts ride on the  
 blast that sweeps by, 15  
 And 'my countrymen! vengeance!'  
 incessantly cry.

OCTOBER, 1809.

## XI. SONG

FIERCE roars the midnight  
 storm

O'er the wild mountain,  
 Dark clouds the night deform,  
 Swift rolls the fountain—

See! o'er yon rocky height, 5  
 Dim mists are flying—  
 See by the moon's pale light,  
 Poor Laura's dying!

Shame and remorse shall howl,  
 By her false pillow— 10  
 Fiercer than storms that roll,  
 O'er the white billow;

No hand her eyes to close,  
 When life is flying,  
 But she will find repose, 15  
 For Laura's dying!

Then will I seek my love,  
 Then will I cheer her,  
 Then my esteem will prove.  
 When no friend is near her. 20

On her grave I will lie,  
 When life is parted,  
 On her grave I will die,  
 For the false hearted.

DECEMBER, 1809.

## XII. SONG

To —— [HARRIET]

AH! sweet is the moonbeam that  
 sleeps on yon fountain,  
 And sweet the mild rush of the  
 soft-sighing breeze,  
 And sweet is the glimpse of yon  
 dimly-seen mountain,  
 'Neath the verdant arcades of  
 yon shadowy trees.

But sweeter than all was thy tone  
 of affection, 5  
 Which scarce seemed to break on  
 the stillness of eve,  
 Though the time it is past!—yet  
 the dear recollection,  
 .For aye in the heart of thy  
 [Percy] must live.

Yet he hears thy dear voice in the  
 summer winds sighing,  
 Mild accents of happiness lisp  
 in his ear, 10  
 When the hope-winged moments  
 athwart him are flying,  
 And he thinks of the friend to  
 his bosom so dear.—

And thou dearest friend in his  
 bosom for ever  
 Must reign unalloyed by the fast  
 rolling year,  
 He loves thee, and dearest one  
 never, Oh! never 15  
 Canst thou cease to be loved by  
 a heart so sincere.

AUGUST, 1810.

## XIII. SONG

To —— [HARRIET]

STERN, stern is the voice of fate's  
 fearful command,  
 When accents of horror it  
 breathes in our ear,  
 Or compels us for aye bid adieu to  
 the land.



Where exists that loved friend to  
 our bosom so dear,  
 'Tis sterner than death o'er the  
 shuddering wretch bending,  
 And in skeleton grasp his fell  
 sceptre extending, 6  
 Like the heart-stricken deer to that  
 loved covert wending,  
 Which never again to his eyes  
 may appear—

And ah! he may envy the heart-  
 stricken quarry,  
 Who bids to the friend of affec-  
 tion farewell, 10

He may envy the bosom so bleed-  
 ing and gory,

He may envy the sound of the  
 drear passing knell,  
 Not so deep is his grief on his  
 death couch reposing,  
 When on the last vision his dim  
 eyes are closing!

As the outcast whose love-raptured  
 senses are losing, 15

The last tones of thy voice on the  
 wild breeze that swell!

Those tones were so soft, and so  
 sad, that ah! never,

Can the sound cease to vibrate  
 on Memory's ear,

In the stern wreck of Nature for  
 ever and ever,

The remembrance must live of a  
 friend so sincere. 20

AUGUST, 1810.

#### XIV

#### SAINT EDMOND'S EVE

OH! did you observe the Black  
 Canon pass,  
 And did you observe his frown?  
 He goeth to say the midnight mass,  
 In holy St. Edmond's town.

He goeth to sing the burial chaunt,  
 And to lay the wandering sprite,

Whose shadowy, restless form doth  
 haunt, 7

The Abbey's drear aisle this  
 night.

It saith it will not its wailing cease,  
 'Till that holy man come near, 10  
 'Till he pour o'er its grave the  
 prayer of peace,  
 And sprinkle the hallowed tear.

The Canon's horse is stout and  
 strong

The road is plain and fair,  
 But the Canon slowly wends along,  
 And his brow is gloomed with  
 care. 16

Who is it thus late at the Abbey-  
 gate?

Sullen echoes the portal bell,  
 It sounds like the whispering voice  
 of fate,

It sounds like a funeral knell. 20

The Canon his faltering knee thrice  
 bowed,

And his frame was convulsed  
 with fear,

When a voice was heard distinct  
 and loud,

'Prepare! for thy hour is near.'

He crosses his breast, he mutters a  
 prayer, 25

To Heaven he lifts his eye,

He heeds not the Abbot's gazing  
 stare,

Nor the dark Monks who mur-  
 mured by.

Bare-headed he worships the sculp-  
 tured saints

That frown on the sacred walls,  
 His face it grows pale,—he trem-  
 bles, he faints, 31

At the Abbot's feet he falls.

And straight the father's robe he  
 kissed,

Who cried, 'Grace dwells with  
thee,  
The spirit will fade like the morn-  
ing mist, 35  
At your benedicite.

'Now haste within! the board is  
spread,  
Keen blows the air, and cold,  
The spectre sleeps in its earthy bed,  
'Till St. Edmond's bell hath  
told,— 40

'Yet rest your wearied limbs to-  
night,  
You've journeyed many a mile,  
To-morrow lay the wailing sprite,  
That shrieks in the moonlight  
aisle.

'Oh! faint are my limbs and my  
bosom is cold, 45  
Yet to-night must the sprite be  
laid,  
Yet to-night when the hour of hor-  
ror's told,  
Must I meet the wandering  
shade.

'Nor food, nor rest may now de-  
lay,—  
For hark! the echoing pile, 50  
A bell loud shakes!—Oh haste  
away,  
O lead to the haunted aisle.'

The torches slowly move before,  
The cross is raised on high,  
A smile of peace the Canon wore, 55  
But horror dimmed his eye—

And now they climb the footworn  
stair,  
The chapel gates unclose,  
Now each breathed low a fervent  
prayer, 59  
And fear each bosom froze—

Now paused awhile the doubtful  
band

And viewed the solemn scene,—  
Full dark the clustered columns  
stand,  
The moon gleams pale be-  
tween—

'Say father, say, what cloisters'  
gloom 65  
Conceals the unquiet shade,  
Within what dark unhallowed  
tomb,  
The corse unblessed was laid.'

'Through yonder drear aisle alone  
it walks,  
And murmurs a mournful plaint,  
Of thee! Black Canon, it wildly  
talks, 71  
And call on thy patron saint—

'The pilgrim this night with won-  
dering eyes,  
As he prayed at St. Edmond's  
shrine,  
From a black marble tomb hath  
seen it rise, 75  
And under yon arch recline.'

'Oh! say upon that black marble  
tomb,  
What memorial sad appears.'—  
'Undistinguished it lies in the chan-  
cel's gloom,  
No memorial sad it bears'— 80

The Canon his paternoster reads,  
His rosary hung by his side,  
Now swift to the chancel doors he  
leads,

And untouched they open wide,  
Resistless, strange sounds his steps  
impel, 85  
To approach to the black marble  
tomb,

'Oh! enter, Black Canon,' a whis-  
per fell,  
'Oh! enter, thy hour is come.'

He paused, told his beads, and the  
threshold passed,

Oh! horror, the chancel doors  
close, 90  
A loud yell was borne on the rising  
blast,  
And a deep, dying groan arose.  
The Monks in amazement shud-  
dering stand,  
They burst through the chan-  
cel's gloom,  
From St. Edmond's shrine, lo! a  
skeleton's hand, 95  
Points to the black marble tomb.  
Lo! deeply engraved, an inscription  
blood red,  
In characters fresh and clear—  
'The guilty Black Canon of Elm-  
ham's dead, 99  
And his wife lies buried here!'  
In Elmham's tower he wedded a  
Nun,  
To St. Edmond's his bride he  
bore,  
On this eve her noviciate here was  
begun,  
And a Monk's gray weeds she  
wore;—  
O! deep was her conscience dyed  
with guilt, 105  
Remorse she full oft revealed,  
Her blood by the ruthless Black  
Canon was spilt,  
And in death her lips he sealed;  
Her spirit to penance this night was  
doomed,  
'Till the Canon atoned the deed,  
Here together they now shall rest  
entombed, 111  
'Till their bodies from dust are  
freed—  
Hark! a loud peal of thunder  
shakes the roof,  
Round the altar bright light-  
nings play,  
Speechless with horror the Monks  
stand aloof, 115

And the storm dies sudden  
away—  
The inscription was gone! a cross  
on the ground,  
And a rosary shone through the  
gloom,  
But never again was the Canon  
there found,  
Or the Ghost on the black mar-  
ble tomb. 129

## XV. REVENGE

'Ah! quit me not yet, for the wind  
whistles shrill,  
Its blast wanders mournfully over  
the hill,  
The thunder's wild voice rattles  
madly above,  
You will not then, cannot then,  
leave me my love.—'  
I must dearest Agnes, the night is  
far gone— 5  
I must wander this evening to  
Strasburg alone,  
I must seek the drear tomb of my  
ancestors' bones,  
And must dig their remains from  
beneath the cold stones.  
'For the spirit of Conrad there  
meets me this night,  
And we quit not the tomb 'till dawn  
of the light, 10  
And Conrad's been dead just a  
month and a day!  
So farewell dearest Agnes for I  
must away,—  
'He bid me bring with me what  
most I held dear,  
Or a month from that time should  
I lie on my bier,  
And I'd sooner resign this false  
fluttering breath, 15  
Than my Agnes should dread either  
danger or death,

'And I love you to madness my  
 Agnes I love,  
 My constant affection this night  
 will I prove,  
 This night will I go to the sepul-  
 chre's jaw,  
 Alone will I glut its all conquering  
 maw'— 20

'No! no loved Adolphus thy Agnes  
 will share,  
 In the tomb all the dangers that  
 wait for you there,  
 I fear not the spirit,—I fear not the  
 grave,  
 My dearest Adolphus I'd perish to  
 save'—

'Nay seek not to say that thy love  
 shall not go, 25  
 But spare me those ages of horror  
 and woe,  
 For I swear to thee here that I'll  
 perish ere day,  
 If you go unattended by Agnes  
 away'—

The night it was bleak the fierce  
 storm raged around,  
 The lightning's blue fire-light  
 flashed on the ground, 30  
 Strange forms seemed to flit,—and  
 howl tidings of fate,  
 As Agnes advanced to the sepul-  
 chre gate.—

The youth struck the portal,—the  
 echoing sound  
 Was fearfully rolled midst the  
 tombstones around,  
 The blue lightning gleamed o'er the  
 dark chapel spire, 35  
 And tinged were the storm clouds  
 with sulphurous fire.

Still they gazed on the tombstone  
 where Conrad reclined,  
 Yet they shrank at the cold chill-  
 ing blast of the wind,

When a strange silver brilliance  
 pervaded the scene,  
 And a figure advanced—tall in  
 form—fierce in mien. 40

A mantle encircled his shadowy  
 form,  
 As light as a gossamer borne on  
 the storm,  
 Celestial terror sat throned in his  
 gaze,  
 Like the midnight pestiferous me-  
 teor's blaze.—

*Spirit.*

Thy father, Adolphus! was false,  
 false as hell, 45  
 And Conrad has cause to remember  
 it well,  
 He ruined my Mother, despised me  
 his son,  
 I quitted the world ere my venge-  
 ance was done.

I was nearly expiring—'twas close  
 of the day,—  
 A demon advanced to the bed  
 where I lay, 50  
 He gave me the power from whence  
 I was hurled,  
 To return to revenge, to return to  
 the world,—

Now Adolphus I'll seize thy best  
 loved in my arms,  
 I'll drag her to Hades all blooming  
 in charms,  
 On the black whirlwind's thunder-  
 ing pinion I'll ride, 55  
 And fierce yelling fiends shall exult  
 o'er thy bride—

He spoke, and extending his  
 ghastly arms wide,  
 Majestic advanced with a swift  
 noiseless stride,  
 He clasped the fair Agnes—he  
 raised her on high,

And cleaving the roof sped his way  
to the sky— 60

All was now silent,—and over the  
tomb,  
Thicker, deeper, was swiftly ex-  
tended a gloom,  
Adolphus in horror sank down on  
the stone,  
And his fleeting soul fled with a  
harrowing groan.

DECEMBER, 1809.

## XVI. GHASTA

### OR, THE AVENGING DEMON!!!

*The idea of the following tale  
was taken from a few unconnected  
German Stanzas.—The principal  
Character is evidently the Wan-  
dering Jew, and although not men-  
tioned by name, the burning Cross  
on his forehead undoubtedly al-  
ludes to that superstition, so preva-  
lent in the part of Germany called  
the Black Forest, where this scene  
is supposed to lie.*

HARK! the owlet flaps her wing,  
In the pathless dell beneath,  
Hark! night ravens loudly sing,  
Tidings of despair and death.—

Horror covers all the sky, 5  
Clouds of darkness blot the  
moon,  
Prepare! for mortal thou must die,  
Prepare to yield thy soul up  
soon—

Fierce the tempest raves around,  
Fierce the volleyed lightnings  
fly, 10  
Crashing thunder shakes the  
ground,

Fire and tumult fill the sky.—

Hark! the tolling village bell,  
Tells the hour of midnight come,  
Now can blast the powers of Hell,

Fiend-like goblins now can  
roam— 16

See! his crest all stained with rain,  
A warrior hastening speeds his  
way,  
He starts, looks round him, starts  
again,  
And sighs for the approach of  
day. 20

See! his frantic steed he reins,  
See! he lifts his hands on high,  
Implores a respite to his pains,  
From the powers of the sky.—

He seeks an Inn, for faint from  
toil, 25  
Fatigue had bent his lofty form.  
To rest his wearied limbs awhile,  
Fatigued with wandering and the  
storm.

: : : : : :

Slow the door is opened wide—  
With trackless tread a stranger  
came, 30  
His form Majestic, slow his stride.  
He sate, nor spake,—nor told his  
name—

Terror blanched the warrior's  
cheek,  
Cold sweat from his forehead  
ran,  
In vain his tongue essayed to  
speak,— 35  
At last the stranger thus be-  
gan:

'Mortal! thou that saw'st the sprite,  
Tell me what I wish to know,  
Or come with me before 'tis light,  
Where cypress trees and man-  
drakes grow. 40

'Fierce the avenging Demon's ire,  
Fiercer than the wintry blast,  
Fiercer than the lightning's fire,  
When the hour of twilight's  
past'—

The warrior raised his sunken  
eye, 45

It met the stranger's sullen scowl,  
'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die,'  
In burning letters chilled his soul.

*Warrior.*

Stranger! whoso'er you are,  
I feel impelled my tale to tell— 50  
Horrors stranger shalt thou hear,  
Horrors drear as those of Hell.

O'er my Castle silence reigned,  
Late the night and drear the  
hour,

When on the terrace I observed, 55  
A fleeting shadowy mist to  
lower.—

Light the cloud as summer fog,  
Which transient shuns the morn-  
ing beam;

Fleeting as the cloud on bog,  
That hangs or on the mountain  
stream.— 60

Horror seized my shuddering brain,  
Horror dimmed my starting eye,  
In vain I tried to speak,—In vain  
My limbs essayed the spot to  
fly—

At last the thin and shadowy  
form, 65

With noiseless, trackless foot-  
steps came,—

Its light robe floated on the storm,  
Its head was bound with lambent  
flame.

In chilling voice drear as the breeze  
Which sweeps along th' autumn-  
nal ground, 70

Which wanders through the leafless  
trees,

Or the mandrake's groan which  
floats around.

'Thou art mine and I am thine,  
'Till the sinking of the world,

I am thine and thou art mine, 75  
'Till in ruin death is hurled —

'Strong the power and dire the fate,  
Which drags me from the depths  
of Hell,

Breaks the tomb's eternal gate,  
Where fiendish shapes and dead  
men yell, 80

'Haply I might ne'er have shrank  
From flames that rack the guilty  
dead,

Haply I might ne'er have sank  
On pleasure's flow'ry, thorny  
bed—

—'But stay! no more I dare dis-  
close, 85

Of the tale I wish to tell,  
On Earth relentless were my woes,  
But fiercer are my pangs in  
Hell—

'Now I claim thee as my love,  
Lay aside all chilling fear, 90  
My affection will I prove  
Where sheeted ghosts and spec-  
tres are!

'For thou art mine, and I am thine,  
'Till the dreaded judgement day,  
I am thine, and thou art mine— 95  
Night is past— I must away.'

Still I gazed, and still the form  
Pressed upon my aching sight,  
Still I braved the howling storm,  
When the ghost dissolved in  
night.—

Restless, sleepless fled the night, 101  
Sleepless as a sick man's bed,  
When he sighs for morning light,  
When he turns his aching  
head,—

Slow and painful passed the day, 105  
Melancholy seized my brain,  
Lingering fled the hours away,  
Lingering to a wretch in pain.—

At last came night, ah! horrid hour,  
 Ah! chilling time that wakes the  
 dead, 110  
 When demons ride the clouds that  
 lower,  
 —The phantom sat upon my  
 bed.

In hollow voice, low as the sound  
 Which in some charnel makes its  
 moan,  
 What floats along the burying  
 ground, 115  
 The phantom claimed me as her  
 own.

Her chilling finger on my head,  
 With coldest touch congealed my  
 soul—  
 Cold as the finger of the dead,  
 Or damps which round a tomb-  
 stone roll— 120

Months are passed in lingering  
 round,  
 Every night the spectre comes,  
 With thrilling step it shakes the  
 ground,  
 With thrilling step it round me  
 roams—

Stranger! I have told to thee, 125  
 All the tale I have to tell—  
 Stranger! canst thou tell to me,  
 How to 'scape the powers of  
 Hell?—

*Stranger.*

Warrior! I can ease thy woes,  
 Wilt thou, wilt thou, come with  
 me— 130

Warrior! I can all disclose,  
 Follow, follow, follow me.

Yet the tempest's duskiest wing,  
 Its mantle stretches o'er the sky,  
 Yet the midnight ravens sing, 135  
 'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die.'

At last they saw a river clear,  
 That crossed the heathy path  
 they trod,  
 The Stranger's look was wild and  
 drear,  
 The firm Earth shook beneath  
 his nod— 140

He raised a wand above his head,  
 He traced a circle on the plain,  
 In a wild verse he called the dead,  
 The dead with silent footsteps  
 came.

A burning brilliance on his head, 145  
 Flaming filled the stormy air,  
 In a wild verse he called the dead,  
 The dead in motley crowd were  
 there.—

'Ghast! Ghast! come along,  
 Bring thy fiendish crowd with  
 thee,  
 Quickly raise th' avenging Song, 151  
 Ghast! Ghast! come to me.'

Horrid shapes in mantles gray,  
 Flit athwart the stormy night,  
 'Ghast! Ghast! come away, 155  
 Come away before 'tis light.'

See! the sheeted Ghost they bring,  
 Yelling dreadful o'er the heath,  
 Hark! the deadly verse they sing,  
 Tidings of despair and death! 160

The yelling Ghost before him  
 stands,  
 See! she rolls her eyes around,  
 Now she lifts her bony hands,  
 Now her footsteps shake the  
 ground.

*Stranger.*

Phantom of Theresa say, 165  
 Why to earth again you came,  
 Quickly speak, I must away!  
 Or you must bleach for aye in  
 flame,—

*Phantom.*

Mighty one I know thee now,  
 Mightiest power of the sky, 170  
 Know thee by thy flaming brow,  
 Know thee by thy sparkling eye.

That fire is scorching! Oh! I came,  
 From the caverned depth of Hell,  
 My fleeting false Rodolph to claim,  
 Mighty one! I know thee  
 well.— 176

*Stranger.*

Ghast! seize yon wandering sprite,  
 Drag her to the depth beneath,  
 Take her swift, before 'tis light,  
 Take her to the cells of death! 180

Thou that heardst the trackless  
 dead,  
 In the mouldering tomb must lie,  
 Mortal! look upon my head,  
 Mortal! Mortal! thou must die.

Of glowing flame a cross was there  
 Which threw a light around his  
 form, 186  
 Whilst his lank and raven hair,  
 Floated wild upon the storm.—

The warrior upwards turned his  
 eyes,  
 Gazed upon the cross of fire, 190  
 There sat horror and surprise,  
 There sat God's eternal ire.—

A shivering through the Warrior  
 flew,  
 Colder than the nightly blast,  
 Colder than the evening dew, 195  
 When the hour of twilight's  
 past.—

Thunder shakes th' expansive sky,  
 Shakes the bosom of the heath,  
 Mortal! Mortal! thou must die'—  
 The warrior sank convulsed in  
 death. 200

JANUARY, 1810.

XVII. FRAGMENT,  
 OR THE TRIUMPH OF  
 CONSCIENCE

'Twas dead of the night when I  
 sate in my dwelling,  
 One glimmering lamp was ex-  
 piring and low,—  
 Around the dark tide of the tem-  
 pest was swelling,  
 Along the wild mountains night-  
 ravens were yelling,  
 They bodingly presaged destruc-  
 tion and woe! 5

'Twas then that I started, the wild  
 storm was howling,  
 Nought was seen, save the light-  
 ning that danced on the sky,  
 Above me the crash of the thunder  
 was rolling,  
 And low, chilling murmurs the  
 blast wafted by.—

My heart sank within me, unheeded  
 the jar 10  
 Of the battling clouds on the  
 mountain-tops broke,  
 Unheeded the thunder-peal crashed  
 in mine ear,  
 This heart hard as iron was stran-  
 ger to fear,  
 But conscience in low noiseless  
 whispering spoke.

'Twas then that her form on the  
 whirlwind uprearing, 15  
 The dark ghost of the murdered  
 Victoria strode,  
 Her right hand a blood reeking dag-  
 ger was bearing,  
 She swiftly advanced to my lone-  
 some abode.—  
 I wildly then called on the tempest  
 to bear me!

. . . . .  
 . . . . .



POEMS FROM ST. IRVYNE, OR,  
THE ROSICRUCIAN

## I.—VICTORIA

[Another version of *The Triumph of Conscience* immediately preceding.]

## I

'Twas dead of the night, when I  
sat in my dwelling;  
One glimmering lamp was expir-  
ing and low;  
Around, the dark tide of the tem-  
pest was swelling,  
Along the wild mountains night-  
ravens were yelling,—  
They bodingly presaged destruc-  
tion and woe. 5

## II

'Twas then that I started!—the  
wild storm was howling,  
Nought was seen, save the light-  
ning, which danced in the  
sky;  
Above me, the crash of the thunder  
was rolling,  
And low, chilling murmurs, the  
blast wafted by.

## III

My heart sank within me—un-  
heeded the war 10  
Of the battling clouds, on the  
mountain-tops, broke;—  
Unheeded the thunder-peal crashed  
in mine ear—  
This heart, hard as iron, is stranger  
to fear;  
But conscience in low, noiseless  
whispering spoke.

## IV

'Twas then that her form on the  
whirlwind upholding, 15

The ghost of the murdered Vic-  
toria strode;  
In her right hand, a shadowy  
shroud she was holding,  
She swiftly advanced to my lone-  
some abode.

## V

I wildly then called on the tempest  
to bear me—  
. . . . .

II.—'ON THE DARK HEIGHT OF  
JURA'

## I

GHOSTS of the dead! have I not  
heard your yelling  
Rise on the night-rolling breath  
of the blast,  
When o'er the dark aether the tem-  
pest is swelling,  
And on eddying whirlwind the  
thunder-peal passed?

## II

For oft have I stood on the dark  
height of Jura, 5  
Which frowns on the valley that  
opens beneath;  
Oft have I braved the chill night-  
tempest's fury,  
Whilst around me, I thought,  
echoed murmurs of death.

## III

And now, whilst the winds of the  
mountain are howling,  
O father! thy voice seems to  
strike on mine ear; 10  
In air whilst the tide of the night-  
storm is rolling,  
It breaks on the pause of the ele-  
ments' jar.

## IV

On the wing of the whirlwind which  
 roars o'er the mountain  
 Perhaps rides the ghost of my  
 sire who is dead:  
 On the mist of the tempest which  
 hangs o'er the fountain, 15  
 Whilst a wreath of dark vapour  
 encircles his head.

## III.—SISTER ROSA: A BALLAD

## I

THE death-bell beats!—  
 The mountain repeats  
 The echoing sound of the knell;  
 And the dark Monk now  
 Wraps the cowl round his brow, 5  
 As he sits in his lonely cell.

## II

And the cold hand of death  
 Chills his shuddering breath,  
 As he lists to the fearful lay  
 Which the ghosts of the sky, 10  
 As they sweep wildly by,  
 Sing to departed day.  
 And they sing of the hour  
 When the stern fates had power  
 To resolve Rosa's form to its  
 clay. 15

## III

But that hour is past;  
 And that hour was the last  
 Of peace to the dark Monk's brain.  
 Bitter tears, from his eyes,  
 gushed silent and fast;  
 And he strove to suppress them in  
 vain.

## IV

Then his fair cross of gold he  
 dashed on the floor, 21  
 When the death-knell struck on his  
 ear.—  
 'Delight is in store

For her evermore;

But for me is fate, horror, and  
 fear.' 25

## V

Then his eyes wildly rolled,  
 When the death-bell tolled,  
 And he raged in terrific woe.  
 And he stamped on the ground,—  
 But when ceased the sound, 30  
 Tears again began to flow.

## VI

And the ice of despair  
 Chilled the wild throb of care,  
 And he sate in mute agony still;  
 Till the night-stars shone  
 through the cloudless air, 35  
 And the pale moonbeam slept on  
 the hill.

## VII

Then he knelt in his cell:—  
 And the horrors of hell  
 Were delights to his agonized pain,  
 And he prayed to God to dissolve  
 the spell, 40  
 Which else must for ever remain.

## VIII

And in fervent pray'r he knelt on  
 the ground,  
 Till the abbey bell struck One:  
 His feverish blood ran chill at the  
 sound:  
 A voice hollow and horrible mur-  
 mured around— 45  
 'The term of thy penance is  
 done!'

## IX

Grew dark the night;  
 The moonbeam bright  
 Waxed faint on the mountain high;  
 And, from the black hill, 50  
 Went a voice cold and still,—  
 'Monk! thou art free to die.'

## X

Then he rose on his feet,  
 And his heart loud did beat,  
 And his limbs they were palsied  
 with dread; 55  
 Whilst the grave's clammy dew  
 O'er his pale forehead grew;  
 And he shuddered to sleep with the  
 dead.

## XI

And the wild midnight storm  
 Raved around his tall form, 60  
 As he sought the chapel's gloom:  
 And the sunk grass did sigh  
 To the wind, bleak and high,  
 As he searched for the new-made  
 tomb.

## XII

And forms, dark and high, 65  
 Seemed around him to fly,  
 And mingle their yells with the  
 blast:  
 And on the dark wall  
 Half-seen shadows did fall,  
 As horrified he onward passed. 70

## XIII

And the storm-fiends wild rave  
 O'er the new-made grave,  
 And dread shadows linger around.  
 The Monk called on God his soul  
 to save,  
 And, in horror, sank on the  
 ground. 75

## XIV

Then despair nerved his arm  
 To dispel the charm,  
 And he burst Rosa's coffin asunder.  
 And the fierce storm did swell  
 More terrific and fell, 80  
 And louder pealed the thunder.

## XV

And laughed, in joy, the fiendish  
 throng,

Mixed with ghosts of the mould-  
 ering dead:  
 And their grisly wings, as they  
 floated along,  
 Whistled in murmurs dread. 85

## XVI

And her skeleton form the dead  
 Nun reared  
 Which dripped with the chill dew  
 of hell.  
 In her half-eaten eyeballs two pale  
 flames appeared,  
 And triumphant their gleam on the  
 dark Monk glared,  
 As he stood within the cell. 90

## XVII

And her lank hand lay on his shud-  
 dering brain;  
 But each power was nerved by  
 fear.—  
 'I never henceforth, may breathe  
 again;  
 Death now ends mine anguished  
 pain.—  
 The grave yawns,—we meet  
 there.' 95

## XVIII

And her skeleton lungs did utter the  
 sound,  
 So deadly, so lone, and so fell,  
 That in long vibrations shuddered  
 the ground;  
 And as the stern notes floated  
 around,  
 A deep groan was answered from  
 hell. 100

## IV.—ST. IRVYNE'S TOWER

## I

How swiftly through Heaven's wide  
 expanse  
 Bright day's resplendent colours  
 fade!

How sweetly does the monbeam's  
glance  
With silver tint St. Irvyne's  
glade!

## II

No cloud along the spangled air, 5  
Is borne upon the evening  
breeze;  
How solemn is the scene! how fair  
The moonbeams rest upon the  
trees!

## III

'On dark gray turret glimmers  
white,  
Upon it sits the mournful owl;  
Along the stillness of the night, 11  
Her melancholy shriekings roll.

## IV

But not alone on Irvyne's tower,  
The silver moonbeam pours her  
ray;  
It gleams upon the ivied bower, 15  
It dances in the cascade's spray.

## V

'Ah! why do dark'ning shades con-  
ceal  
The hour, when man must cease  
to be?  
Why may not human minds unveil  
The dim mists of futurity? 20

## VI

'The keenness of the world hath  
torn  
The heart which opens to its  
blast;  
Despised, neglected, and forlorn,  
Sinks the wretch in death at  
last.'

## V.—BEREAVEMENT

## I

How stern are the woes of the  
desolate mourner,

As he bends in still grief o'er  
the hallowèd bier,  
As enanguished he turns from the  
laugh of the scorner,  
And drops, to Perfection's re-  
membrance, a tear;  
When floods of despair down his  
pale cheek are streaming, 5  
When no blissful hope on his bosom  
is beaming,  
Or, if lulled for awhile, soon he  
starts from his dreaming,  
And finds torn the soft ties to  
affection so dear.

## II

Ah! when shall day dawn on the  
night of the grave,  
Or summer succeed to the winter  
of death? 10  
Rest awhile, hapless victim, and  
Heaven will save  
The spirit, that faded away with  
the breath.  
Eternity points in its amaranth  
bower,  
Where no clouds of fate o'er the  
sweet prospect lower,  
Unspeakable pleasure, of goodness  
the dower, 15  
When woe fades away like the  
mist of the heath.

## VI.—THE DROWNED LOVER

## I

AH! faint are her limbs, and her  
footstep is weary,  
Yet far must the desolate wan-  
derer roam;  
Though the tempest is stern, and  
the mountain is dreary,  
She must quit at deep midnight  
her pitiless home.  
I see her swift foot dash the dew  
from the whortle, 5  
As she rapidly hastes to the green  
grove of myrtle;

And I hear, as she wraps round  
her figure the kirtle,  
'Stay thy boat on the lake,—  
dearest Henry, I come.'

## II

High swelled in her bosom the  
throb of affection,  
As lightly her form bounded over  
the lea, 10  
And arose in her mind every dear  
recollection;  
'I come, dearest Henry, and wait  
but for thee.'  
How sad, when dear hope every  
sorrow is soothing,  
When sympathy's swell the soft  
bosom is moving,  
And the mind the mild joys of af-  
fection is proving, 15

Is the stern voice of fate that  
bids happiness flee!

## III

Oh! dark lowered the clouds on  
that horrible eve,  
And the moon dimly gleamed  
through the tempested air;  
Oh! how could fond visions such  
softness deceive?  
Oh! how could false hope rend  
a bosom so fair? 20  
Thy love's pallid corse the wild  
surges are laving,  
O'er his form the fierce swell of  
the tempest is raving;  
But, fear not, parting spirit; thy  
goodness is saving,  
In eternity's bowers, a seat for  
thee there.

## POSTHUMOUS FRAGMENTS OF MARGARET NICHOLSON

Being Poems found amongst the Papers of that noted Female who  
attempted the life of the King in 1786. Edited by John Fitzvictor.

### ADVERTISEMENT

THE energy and native genius of these Fragments must be the only apology which the Editor can make for thus intruding them on the public notice. The first I found with no title, and have left it so. It is intimately connected with the dearest interests of universal happiness; and much as we may deplore the fatal and enthusiastic tendency which the ideas of this poor female had acquired, we cannot fail to pay the tribute of unequivocal regret to the departed memory of genius, which, had it been rightly organized, would have made that intellect, which has since become the victim of frenzy and despair, a most brilliant ornament to society.

In case the sale of these Fragments evinces that the public have any curiosity to be presented with a more copious collection of my unfortunate Aunt's poems, I have other papers in my possession which shall, in that case, be subjected to their notice. It may be supposed they require much arrangement; but I send the following to the press in the same state in which they came into my possession.

J. F.

## WAR

AMBITION, power, and avarice, now  
 have hurled  
 Death, fate, and ruin, on a bleed-  
 ing world.  
 See! on yon heath what countless  
 victims lie,  
 Hark! what loud shrieks ascend  
 through yonder sky;  
 Tell then the cause, 'tis sure the  
 avenger's rage 5  
 Has swept these myriads from  
 life's crowded stage:  
 Hark to that groan, an anguished  
 hero dies,  
 He shudders in death's latest  
 agonies;  
 Yet does a fleeting hectic flush his  
 cheek,  
 Yet does his parting breath essay  
 to speak— 10  
 'Oh God! my wife, my children—  
 Monarch thou  
 For whose support this fainting  
 frame lies low;  
 For whose support in distant lands  
 I bleed,  
 Let his friends' welfare be the war-  
 rior's meed.  
 He hears me not—ah! no—kings  
 cannot hear, 15  
 For passion's voice has dulled their  
 listless ear.  
 To thee, then, mighty God, I lift  
 my moan,  
 Thou wilt not scorn a suppliant's  
 anguished groan.  
 Oh! now I die—but still is death's  
 fierce pain—  
 God hears my prayer—we meet,  
 we meet again,' 20  
 He spake, reclined him on death's  
 bloody bed,  
 And with a parting groan his spirit  
 fled.

Oppressors of mankind to *you*  
 we owe  
 The baleful streams from whence  
 these miseries flow;  
 For you how many a mother weeps  
 her son, 25  
 Snatched from life's course ere  
 half his race was run!  
 For you how many a widow drops  
 a tear,  
 In silent anguish, on her husband's  
 bier!  
 'Is it then Thine, Almighty  
 Power,' she cries,  
 'Whence tears of endless sorrow  
 dim these eyes? 30  
 Is this the system which Thy  
 powerful sway,  
 Which else in shapeless chaos sleep-  
 ing lay,  
 Formed and approved?—it cannot  
 be—but oh!  
 Forgive me, Heaven, my brain is  
 warped by woe.'  
 'Tis not—He never bade the war-  
 note swell, 35  
 He never triumphed in the work of  
 hell—  
 Monarchs of earth! thine is the  
 baleful deed,  
 Thine are the crimes for which thy  
 subjects bleed.  
 Ah! when will come the sacred  
 fated time,  
 When man unsullied by his leaders'  
 crime, 40  
 Despising wealth, ambition, pomp,  
 and pride,  
 Will stretch him fearless by his foe-  
 men's side?  
 Ah! when will come the time, when  
 o'er the plain  
 No more shall death and desolation  
 reign?  
 When will the sun smile on the  
 bloodless field, 45

And the stern warrior's arm the  
sickle wield?

Not whilst some King, in cold am-  
bition's dreams,

Plans for the field of death his  
plodding schemes;

Not whilst for private pique the  
public fall,

And one frail mortal's mandate  
governs all. 50

Swelled with command and mad  
with dizzying sway;

Who sees unmoved his myriads  
fade away.

Careless who lives or dies—so that  
he gains

Some trivial point for which he  
took the pains.

What then are Kings?—I see the  
trembling crowd, 55

I hear their fulsome clamours  
echoed loud;

Their stern oppressor pleased ap-  
pears awhile,

But April's sunshine is a Mon-  
arch's smile—

Kings are but dust—the last event-  
ful day

Will level all and make them lose  
their sway; 60

Will dash the sceptre from the  
Monarch's hand,

And from the warrior's grasp wrest  
the ensanguined brand.

Oh! Peace, soft Peace, art thou  
for ever gone,

Is thy fair form indeed for ever  
flown?

And love and concord hast thou  
swept away, 65

As if incongruous with thy parted  
sway?

Alas, I fear thou hast, for none  
appear.

Now o'er the palsied earth stalks  
giant Fear,

With War, and Woe, and Terror in  
his train;

List'ning he pauses on the embat-  
tled plain, 70

Then speeding swiftly o'er the en-  
sanguined heath,

Has left the frightful work to Hell  
and Death.

See! gory Ruin yokes his blood-  
stained car,

He scents the battle's carnage from  
afar;

Hell and Destruction mark his mad  
career, 75

He tracks the rapid step of hurry-  
ing Fear;

Whilst ruined towns and smoking  
cities tell,

That thy work, Monarch, is the  
work of Hell.

'It is thy work!' I hear a voice  
repeat,

Shakes the broad basis of thy  
blood-stained seat; 80

And at the orphan's sigh, the  
widow's moan,

Totters the fabric of thy guilt-  
stained throne—

'It is thy work, O Monarch;' now  
the sound

Fainter and fainter, yet is borne  
around,

Yet to enthusiast ears the murmurs  
tell 85

That Heaven, indignant at the  
work of Hell,

Will soon the cause, the hated cause  
remove,

Which tears from earth peace, in-  
nocence, and love.

### FRAGMENT

SUPPOSED TO BE AN EPITHALAMIUM  
OF FRANCIS RAVAILLAC AND  
CHARLOTTE CORDAY

'Tis midnight now—athwart the  
murky air,

Dank lurid meteors shoot a livid  
gleam;  
From the dark storm-clouds flashes  
a fearful glare,  
It shows the bending oak, the  
roaring stream.  
I pondered on the woes of lost man-  
kind, 5  
I pondered on the ceaseless rage  
of Kings;  
My rapt soul dwelt upon the ties  
that bind  
The mazy volume of commin-  
gling things,  
When fell and wild misrule to man  
stern sorrow brings.  
I heard a yell—it was not the knell,  
When the blasts on the wild lake  
sleep, 11  
That floats on the pause of the sum-  
mer gale's swell,  
O'er the breast of the waveless  
deep.  
I thought it had been death's ac-  
cents cold  
That bade me recline on the  
shore; 15  
I laid mine hot head on the surge-  
beaten mould,  
And thought to breathe no more.  
But a heavenly sleep  
That did suddenly steep  
In balm my bosom's pain, 20  
Pervaded my soul,  
And free from control,  
Did mine intellect range  
again.  
Methought enthroned upon a sil-  
very cloud,  
Which floated mid a strange and  
brilliant light; 25  
My form upborne by viewless  
aether rode,  
And spurned the lessening realms  
of earthly night.

What heavenly notes burst on my  
ravished ears,  
What beauteous spirits met my  
dazzled eye!  
Hark! louder swells the music of  
the spheres, 30  
More clear the forms of speech-  
less bliss float by,  
And heavenly gestures suit æthe-  
real melody.  
But fairer than the spirits of the air,  
More graceful than the Sylph of  
symmetry,  
Than the enthusiast's fancied love  
more fair, 35  
Were the bright forms that swept  
the azure sky.  
Enthroned in roseate light, a heav-  
enly band  
Strewed flowers of bliss that  
never fade away;  
They welcome virtue to its native  
land,  
And songs of triumph greet the  
joyous day 40  
When endless bliss the woes of fleet-  
ing life repay.  
Congenial minds will seek their  
kindred soul,  
E'en though the tide of time has  
rolled between;  
They mock weak matter's impotent  
control,  
And seek of endless life the eter-  
nal scene. 45  
At death's vain summons *this* will  
never die,  
In Nature's chaos *this* will not  
decay—  
These are the bands which closely,  
warmly, tie  
Thy soul, O Charlotte, 'yond this  
chain of clay,  
To him who thine must be till time  
shall fade away. 50



Yes, Francis! thine was the dear  
knife that tore

A tyrant's heart-strings from his  
guilty breast,

Thine was the daring at a tyrant's  
gore,

To smile in triumph, to condemn  
the rest;

And thine, loved glory of thy sex!  
to tear 55

From its base shrine a despot's  
haughty soul,

To laugh at sorrow in secure de-  
spair,

To mock, with smiles, life's lin-  
gering control,

And triumph mid the griefs that  
round thy fate did roll.

Yes! the fierce spirits of the aveng-  
ing deep 60

With endless tortures goad their  
guilty shades.

I see the lank and ghastly spectres  
sweep

Along the burning length of yon  
arcades;

And I see Satan stalk athwart the  
plain;

He hastes along the burning soil  
of Hell. 65

'Welcome, ye despots, to my dark  
domain,

With maddening joy mine an-  
guished senses swell

To welcome to their home the  
friends I love so well.'

Hark! to those notes, how sweet,  
how thrilling sweet

They echo to the sound of angels'  
feet. 70

Oh haste to the bower where roses  
are spread,

For there is prepared thy nuptial  
bed.

Oh haste—hark! hark!—they're  
gone.

*Chorus of Spirits.*

Stay, ye days of contentment and  
joy, 74

Whilst love every care is erasing,  
Stay ye pleasures that never can  
cloy,

And ye spirits that can never  
cease pleasing.

And if any soft passion be near,  
Which mortals, frail mortals, can  
know,

Let love shed on the bosom a tear,  
And dissolve the chill ice-drop of  
woe. 81

SYMPHONY.

*Francis.*

'SOFT, my dearest angel, stay,  
Oh! you suck my soul away;  
Suck on, suck on, I glow, I glow!  
Tides of maddening passion roll, 85  
And streams of rapture drown my  
soul.

Now give me one more billing kiss,  
Let your lips now repeat the bliss,  
Endless kisses steal my breath,  
No life can equal such a death.' 90

*Charlotte.*

'Oh! yes I will kiss thine eyes so  
fair,

And I will clasp thy form;  
Serene is the breath of the balmy  
air,

But I think, love, thou feelest me  
warm

And I will recline on thy marble  
neck 95

Till I mingle into thee;  
And I will kiss the rose on thy  
cheek,

And thou shalt give kisses to me.

For here is no morn to flout our delight,

Oh! dost thou not joy at this? 100  
And here we may lie an endless night,

A long, long night of bliss.'

Spirits! when raptures move,

Say what it is to love,

When passion's tear stands on the cheek, 105

When bursts the unconscious sigh;

And the tremulous lips dare not speak

What is told by the soul-felt eye.

But what is sweeter to revenge's ear

Than the fell tyrant's last expiring yell? 110

Yes! than love's sweetest blisses 'tis more dear

To drink the floatings of a despot's knell.

I wake—'tis done—'tis over.

### DESPAIR

AND canst thou mock mine agony, thus calm

In cloudless radiance, Queen of silver night?

Can you, ye flow'rets, spread your perfumed balm

Mid pearly gems of dew that shine so bright?

And you wild winds, thus can you sleep so still 5

Whilst throbs the tempest of my breast so high?

Can the fierce night-fiends rest on yonder hill,

And, in the eternal mansions of the sky,

Can the directors of the storm in powerless silence lie?

Hark! I hear music on the zephyr's wing, 10

Louder it floats along the unruffled sky;

Some fairy sure has touched the viewless string—

Now faint in distant air the murmurs die.

Awhile it stills the tide of agony.

Now—now it loftier swells—again stern woe 15

Arises with the awakening melody.

Again fierce torments, such as demons know,

In bitter, feller tide, on this torn bosom flow.

Arise ye sightless spirits of the storm,

Ye unseen minstrels of the æreal song, 20

Pour the fierce tide around this lonely form,

And roll the tempest's wildest swell along.

Dart the red lightning, wing the forkèd flash,

Pour from thy cloud-formed hills the thunder's roar;

Arouse the whirlwind—and let ocean dash 25

In fiercest tumult on the rocking shore,—

Destroy this life or let earth's fabric be no more.

Yes! every tie that links me here is dead;

Mysterious Fate, thy mandate I obey,

Since hope and peace, and joy, for aye are fled, 30

I come, terrific power, I come away.

Then o'er this ruined soul let spirits of Hell,

In triumph, laughing wildly, mock its pain;

And though with direst pangs mine heart-strings swell,

I'll echo back their deadly yells  
again, 35  
Cursing the power that ne'er made  
aught in vain.

## FRAGMENT

YES! all is past—swift time has  
fled away,

Yet its swell pauses on my sick-  
ening mind;  
How long will horror nerve this  
frame of clay?

I'm dead, and lingers yet my soul  
behind.

Oh! powerful Fate, revoke thy  
deadly spell, 5

And yet that may not ever, ever  
be,

Heaven will not smile upon the  
work of Hell;

Ah! no, for Heaven cannot smile  
on me;

Fate, envious Fate, has sealed my  
wayward destiny.

I sought the cold brink of the mid-  
night surge, 10

I sighed beneath its wave to hide  
my woes,

The rising tempest sung a funeral  
dirge,

And on the blast a frightful yell  
arose.

Wild flew the meteors o'er the mad-  
dened main,

Wilder did grief athwart my  
bosom glare; 15

Stilled was the unearthly howling,  
and a strain,

Swelled mid the tumult of the  
battling air,

'Twas like a spirit's song, but yet  
more soft and fair.

I met a maniac—like he was to me,  
I said—'Poor victim, wherefore  
dost thou roam? 20

And canst thou not contend with  
agony.

That thus at midnight thou dost  
quit thine home?' 35

'Ah there she sleeps: cold in her  
bloodless form,

And I will go to slumber in her  
grave;

And then our ghosts, whilst raves  
the maddened storm, 25

Will sweep at midnight o'er the  
wilderer wave;

Wilt thou our lowly beds with tears  
of pity lave?' 30

'Ah! no, I cannot shed the pitying  
tear,

This breast is cold, this heart can  
feel no more;

But I can rest me on thy chilling  
bier, 30

Can shriek in horror to the tem-  
pest's roar.'

. . . . .

THE SPECTRAL  
HORSEMAN

WHAT was the shriek that struck  
Fancy's ear

As it sate on the ruins of time that  
is past?

Hark! it floats on the fitful blast of  
the wind,

And breathes to the pale moon a  
funeral sigh.

It is the Benshie's moan on the  
storm, 5

Or a shivering fiend that thirsting  
for sin,

Seeks murder and guilt when virtue  
sleeps,

Winged with the power of some  
ruthless king,

And sweeps o'er the breast of the  
prostrate plain.

It was not a fiend from the regions  
of Hell 10

That poured its low moan on the  
stillness of night:

It was not a ghost of the guilty  
     dead,  
 Nor a yelling vampire reeking with  
     gore;  
 But aye at the close of seven years'  
     end,  
 That voice is mixed with the swell  
     of the storm, 15  
 And aye at the close of seven  
     years' end,  
 A shapeless shadow that sleeps on  
     the hill  
 Awakens and floats on the mist of  
     the heath.  
 It is not the shade of a murdered  
     man,  
 Who has rushed uncalled to the  
     throne of his God, 20  
 And howls in the pause of the eddy-  
     ing storm.  
 This voice is low, cold, hollow, and  
     chill,  
 'Tis not heard by the ear, but is felt  
     in the soul.  
 'Tis more frightful far than the  
     death-daemon's scream,  
 Or the laughter of fiends when they  
     howl o'er the corpse 25  
 Of a man who has sold his soul to  
     Hell.  
 It tells the approach of a mystic  
     form,  
 A white courser bears the shadowy  
     sprite;  
 More thin they are than the mists  
     of the mountain,  
 When the clear moonlight sleeps on  
     the waveless lake. 30  
 More pale *his* cheek than the snows  
     of Nithona,  
 When winter rides on the northern  
     blast,  
 And howls in the midst of the leaf-  
     less wood.  
 Yet when the fierce swell of the  
     tempest is raving,

And the whirlwinds howl in the  
     caves of Inisfallen, 35  
 Still secure mid the wildest war of  
     the sky,  
 The phantom courser scours the  
     waste,  
 And his rider howls in the thunder's  
     roar.  
 O'er him the fierce bolts of avenging  
     Heaven  
 Pause, as in fear, to strike his  
     head. 40  
 The meteors of midnight recoil  
     from his figure,  
 Yet the 'wilderer peasant, that oft  
     passes by,  
 With wonder beholds the blue flesh  
     through his form:  
 And his voice, though faint as the  
     sighs of the dead,  
 The startled passenger shudders to  
     hear, 45  
 More distinct than the thunder's  
     wildest roar.  
 Then does the dragon, who, chained  
     in the caverns  
 To eternity, curses the champion  
     of Erin,  
 Moan and yell loud at the lone  
     hour of midnight,  
 And twine his vast wreaths round  
     the forms of the daemons;  
 Then in agony roll his death-swim-  
     ming eyeballs, 51  
 Though 'wilderer by death, yet  
     never to die!  
 Then he shakes from his skeleton  
     folds the nightmares,  
 Who, shrieking in agony, seek the  
     couch  
 Of some fevered wretch who courts  
     sleep in vain; 55  
 Then the tombless ghosts of the  
     guilty dead  
 In horror pause on the fitful gale.  
 They float on the swell of the eddy-  
     ing tempest,

And scared seek the caves of gigantic ...

Where their thin forms pour un-  
earthly sounds 60

On the blast that sweeps the breast  
of the lake,

And mingles its swell with the  
moonlight air.

### MELODY TO A SCENE OF FORMER TIMES

ART thou indeed forever gone,

Forever, ever, lost to me?

Must this poor bosom beat alone,  
Or beat at all, if not for thee?

Ah! why was love to mortals  
given, 5

To lift them to the height of  
Heaven,

Or dash them to the depths of Hell?

Yet I do not reproach thee, dear!

Ah, no! the agonies that swell  
This panting breast, this fren-  
zied brain, 10

Might wake my ——'s slum-  
b'ring tear.

Oh! Heaven is witness I did love,  
And Heaven does know I love thee  
still,

Does know the fruitless sick'ning  
thrill,

When reason's judgment vainly  
strove 15

To blot thee from my memory;

But which might never, never be.

Oh! I appeal to that blest day

When passion's wildest ecstasy

Was coldness to the joys I knew, 20

When every sorrow sunk away.

Oh! I had never lived before,

But now those blisses are no more.

And now I cease to live again,

I do not blame thee, love; ah,  
no! 25

The breast that feels this anguished  
woe

Throbs for thy happiness alone.

Two years of speechless bliss are  
gone,

I thank thee, dearest, for the dream.

'Tis night—what faint and distant  
scream 30

Comes on the wild and fitful blast?

It moans for pleasures that are past,

It moans for days that are gone by.

Oh! lagging hours, how slow you  
fly!

I see a dark and lengthened  
vale, 35

The black view closes with the  
tomb;

But darker is the lowering gloom

That shades the intervening  
dale.

In visioned slumber for awhile

I seem again to share thy smile, 40

I seem to hang upon thy tone.

Again you say, 'Confide in me.

For I am thine, and thine alone,

And thine must ever, ever be.'

But oh! awak'ning still anew, 45

Athwart my enanguished senses  
flew

A fiercer, deadlier agony!

[End of *Posthumous Fragments*  
of Margaret Nicholson.]

### STANZA FROM A TRANSLA- TION OF THE MARSEIL- LAISE HYMN

TREMBLE, Kings despised of man!

Ye traitors to your Country,

Tremble! Your parricidal plan

At length shall meet its des-  
tiny ...

We all are soldiers fit to fight, 5

But if we sink in glory's night

Our mother Earth will give ye new

The brilliant pathway to pursue

Which leads to Death or Vic-  
tory ...

## BIGOTRY'S VICTIM

## I

DARES the lama, most fleet of the  
 sons of the wind,  
 The lion to rouse from his skull-  
 covered lair?  
 When the tiger approaches can the  
 fast-fleeting hind  
 Repose trust in his footsteps of  
 air?  
 No! Abandoned he sinks in a trance  
 of despair, 5  
 The monster transfixes his  
 prey,  
 On the sand flows his life-  
 blood away;  
 Whilst India's rocks to his death-  
 yells reply,  
 Protracting the horrible harmony.

## II

Yet the fowl of the desert, when  
 danger encroaches, 10  
 Dares fearless to perish defend-  
 ing her brood,  
 Though the fiercest of cloud-pierc-  
 ing tyrants approaches  
 Thirsting—ay, thirsting for  
 blood;  
 And demands, like mankind, his  
 brother for food;  
 Yet more lenient, more gen-  
 tle than they; 15  
 For hunger, not glory, the  
 prey  
 Must perish. Revenge does not howl  
 in the dead.  
 Nor ambition with fame crown the  
 murderer's head.

## III

Though weak as the lama that  
 bounds on the mountains,  
 And endued not with fast-fleet-  
 ing footsteps of air, 20

Yet, yet will I draw from the purest  
 of fountains,  
 Though a fiercer than tiger is  
 there.  
 Though, more dreadful than death,  
 it scatters despair,  
 Though its shadow eclipses  
 the day,  
 And the darkness of deepest  
 dismay 25  
 Spreads the influence of soul-chill-  
 ing terror around,  
 And lowers on the corpses, that rot  
 on the ground.

## IV

They came to the fountain to draw  
 from its stream  
 Waves too pure, too celestial, for  
 mortals to see;  
 They bathed for awhile in its sil-  
 very beam, 30  
 Then perished, and perished like  
 me.  
 For in vain from the grasp of the  
 Bigot I flee;  
 The most tenderly loved of  
 my soul  
 Are slaves to his hated con-  
 trol.  
 He pursues me, he blasts me! 'Tis  
 in vain that I fly: 35  
 What remains, but to curse him,—  
 to curse him and die?

ON AN ICICLE THAT CLUNG  
TO THE GRASS OF A GRAVE

## I

OH! take the pure gem to where  
 southerly breezes,  
 Waft repose to some bosom as  
 faithful as fair,  
 In which the warm current of love  
 never freezes,  
 As it rises unmingled with selfish-  
 ness there,

Which, untainted by pride, unpolluted by care, 5  
Might dissolve the dim icedrop, might bid it arise,  
Too pure for these regions, to gleam in the skies.

## II

Or where the stern warrior, his country defending,  
Dares fearless the dark-rolling battle to pour,  
Or o'er the fell corpse of a dread tyrant bending, 10  
Where patriotism red with his guilt-reeking gore  
Plants Liberty's flag on the slave-peopled shore,  
With victory's cry, with the shout of the free,  
Let it fly, taintless Spirit, to mingle with thee.

## III

For I found the pure gem, when the daybeam returning, 15  
Ineffectual gleams on the snow-covered plain,  
When to others the wished-for arrival of morning  
Brings relief to long visions of soul-racking pain;  
But regret is an insult—to grieve is in vain:  
And why should we grieve that a spirit so fair 20  
Seeks Heaven to mix with its own kindred there?

## IV

But still 'twas some Spirit of kindness descending  
To share in the load of mortality's woe,  
Who over thy lowly-built sepulchre bending

Bade sympathy's tenderest tear-drop to flow. 25  
Not for *thee* soft compassion celestials did know,  
But if *angels* can weep, sure *man* may repine,  
May weep in mute grief o'er thy low-laid shrine.

## V

And did I then say, for the altar of glory,  
That the earliest, the loveliest of flowers I'd entwine, 30  
Though with millions of blood-reeking victims 'twas gory.  
Though the tears of the widow polluted its shrine,  
Though around it the orphans, the fatherless pine?  
Oh! Fame, all thy glories I'd yield for a tear  
To shed on the grave of a heart so sincere. 35

## LOVE

WHY is it said thou canst not live  
In a youthful breast and fair,  
Since thou eternal life canst give,  
Canst bloom for ever there?  
Since withering pain no power possessed, 5  
Nor age, to blanch thy vermeil hue,  
Nor time's dread victor, death, confessed,  
Though bathed with his poison dew,  
Still thou retain'st unchanging bloom,  
Fixed tranquil, even in the tomb. 10  
And oh! when on the blest, reviving,  
The day-star dawns of love,  
Each energy of soul surviving  
More vivid, soars above,

Hast thou ne'er felt a rapturous  
thrill, 15

Like June's warm breath,  
athwart thee fly,  
O'er each idea then to steal,  
When other passions die?  
Felt it in some wild noonday dream,  
When sitting by the lonely stream,  
Where Silence says, 'Mine is the  
dell'; 21

And not a murmur from the  
plain,  
And not an echo from the fell,  
Disputes her silent reign.

#### ON A FETE AT CARLTON HOUSE: FRAGMENT

By the mossy brink,  
With me the Prince shall sit and  
think;  
Shall muse in visioned Regency,  
Rapt in bright dreams of dawning  
Royalty.

#### TO A STAR

SWEET star, which gleaming o'er  
the darksome scene  
Through fleecy clouds of silvery  
radiance fliest,  
Spanglet of light on evening's  
shadowy veil,  
Which shrouds the day-beam from  
the waveless lake,  
Lighting the hour of sacred love;  
more sweet 5  
Than the expiring morn-star's paly  
fires:—

Sweet star! When wearied Nature  
sinks to sleep,  
And all is hushed,—all, save the  
voice of Love,  
Whose broken murmurings swell  
the balmy blast  
Of soft Favonius, which at inter-  
vals 10  
Sighs in the ear of stillness, art  
thou aught but

Lulling the slaves of interest to re-  
pose

With that mild, pitying gaze? Oh,  
I would look

In thy dear beam till every bond of  
sense

Became enamoured—— 15

#### TO MARY, WHO DIED IN THIS OPINION

##### I

MAIDEN, quench the glare of sor-  
row

Struggling in thine haggard eye:  
Firmness dare to borrow

From the wreck of destiny;  
For the ray morn's bloom reveal-  
ing 5

Can never boast so bright an hue  
As that which mocks concealing,  
And sheds its loveliest light on you.

##### II

Yet is the tie departed  
Which bound thy lovely soul to  
bliss? 10

Has it left thee broken-hearted  
In a world so cold as this?

Yet, though, fainting fair one,  
Sorrow's self thy cup has given,

Dream thou'lt meet thy dear  
one, 15

Never more to part, in Heaven.

##### III

Existence would I barter  
For a dream so dear as thine,  
And smile to die a martyr  
On affection's bloodless shrine. 20  
Nor would I change for pleas-  
ure

That withered hand and ashy  
cheek,

If my heart enshrined a treasure  
Such as forces thine to break.



A TALE OF SOCIETY AS IT  
IS: FROM FACTS, 1811

## I

SHE was an agèd woman; and the  
years

Which she had numbered on her  
toilsome way

Had bowed her natural powers  
to decay.

She was an agèd woman; yet the  
ray

Which faintly glimmered through  
her starting tears, <sup>5</sup>

Pressed into light by silent  
misery,

Hath soul's imperishable energy.

She was a cripple, and in-  
capable

To add one mite to gold-fed  
luxury:

And therefore did her spirit  
dimly feel <sup>10</sup>

That poverty, the crime of  
tainting stain,

Would merge her in its depths,  
never to rise again.

## II

One only son's love had sup-  
ported her.

She long had struggled with  
infirmity,

Lingering to human life-  
scenes; for to die, <sup>15</sup>

When fate has spared to rend  
some mental tie,

Would many wish, and surely  
fewer dare.

But, when the tyrant's blood-  
hounds forced the child

For his cursed power unhallowed  
arms to wield—

Bend to another's will—be-  
come a thing <sup>20</sup>

More senseless than the sword of  
battlefield—

Then did she feel keen sor-  
row's keenest sting;  
And many years had passed ere  
comfort they would bring.

## III

For seven years did this poor  
woman live

In unparticipated solitude. <sup>25</sup>

Thou mightst have seen her  
in the forest rude

Picking the scattered rem-  
nants of its wood.

If human, thou mightst then  
have learned to grieve.

The gleanings of precarious  
charity

Her scantiness of food did scarce  
supply. <sup>30</sup>

The proofs of an unspeaking  
sorrow dwelt

Within her ghastly hollowness of  
eye:

Each arrow of the season's  
change she felt.

Yet still she groans, ere yet her  
race were run,

One only hope: it was—once more  
to see her son. <sup>35</sup>

## IV

It was an eve of June, when  
every star

Spoke peace from Heaven to  
those on earth that live.

She rested on the moor. 'Twas  
such an eve

When first her soul began in-  
deed to grieve:

Then he was here; now he is very  
far. <sup>40</sup>

The sweetness of the balmy eve-  
ning

A sorrow o'er her agèd soul did  
fling,

Yet not devoid of rapture's  
mingled tear:

A balm was in the poison of the  
sting.

This aged sufferer for many a  
year 45

Had never felt such comfort. She  
suppressed

A sigh—and turning round, clasped  
William to her breast!

## v

And, though his form was wasted  
by the woe

Which tyrants on their victims  
love to wreak,

Though his sunk eyeballs and  
his faded cheek 50

Of slavery's violence and scorn  
did speak,

Yet did the aged woman's bosom  
glow.

The vital fire seemed re-illumed  
within

By this sweet unexpected wel-  
coming.

Oh, consummation of the fond-  
est hope 55

That ever soared on Fancy's  
wildest wing!

Oh, tenderness that foundst so  
sweet a scope!

Prince who dost pride thee on  
thy mighty sway,

When *thou* canst feel such love,  
thou shalt be great as they!

## vi

Her son, compelled, the country's  
foes had fought, 60

Had bled in battle; and the  
stern control

Which ruled his sinews and  
coerced his soul

Utterly poisoned life's unmin-  
gled bowl,

And unsubduable evils on him  
brought.

He was the shadow of the lusty  
child 65

Who, when the time of summer  
season smiled,

Did earn for her a meal of  
honesty,

And with affectionate discourse  
beguiled

The keen attacks of pain and  
poverty;

Till Power, as envying her this  
only joy, 70

From her maternal bosom tore the  
unhappy boy.

## vii

And now cold charity's unwel-  
come dole

Was insufficient to support the  
pair;

And they would perish rather  
than would bear

The law's stern slavery, and  
the insolent stare 75

With which law loves to rend the  
poor man's soul—

The bitter scorn, the spirit-sink-  
ing noise

Of heartless mirth which women,  
men, and boys

Wake in this scene of legal  
misery.

. . . . .

## TO THE REPUBLICANS OF NORTH AMERICA

## i

BROTHERS! between you and me  
Whirlwinds sweep and billows  
roar:

Yet in spirit oft I see  
On thy wild and winding shore

Freedom's bloodless banners  
wave,—

Feel the pulses of the brave

Unextinguished in the grave,—  
See them drenched in sacred  
gore,—

Catch the warrior's gasping breath  
Murmuring 'Liberty or death!' 10

## II

Shout aloud! Let every slave,  
Crouching at Corruption's  
throne,  
Start into a man, and brave  
Racks and chains without a  
groan;

And the castle's heartless glow, 15  
And the hovel's vice and woe,  
Fade like gaudy flowers that  
blow—

Weeds that peep, and then are  
gone

Whilst, from misery's ashes risen,  
Love shall burst the captive's  
prison. 20

## III

Cotopaxi! bid the sound  
Through thy sister mountains  
ring,

Till each valley smile around  
At the blissful welcoming!  
And, O thou stern Ocean deep, 25  
Thou whose foamy billows sweep  
Shores where thousands wake to  
weep

Whilst they curse a villain king,  
On the winds that fan thy breast  
Bear thou news of Freedom's rest!

## IV

Can the daystar dawn of love, 31  
Where the flag of war unfurled  
Floats with crimson stain above  
The fabric of a ruined world?  
Never but to vengeance driven 35  
When the patriot's spirit shriven  
Seeks in death its native Heaven!

There, to desolation hurled,  
Widowed love may watch thy bier,  
Balm thee with its dying tear. 40

## TO IRELAND

## I

BEAR witness, Erin! when thine in-  
jured isle

Sees summer on its verdant pas-  
tures smile,

Its cornfields waving in the winds  
that sweep

The billowy surface of thy circling  
deep!

Thou tree whose shadow o'er the  
Atlantic gave

Peace, wealth and beauty, to its  
friendly wave,

Its blossoms fade,  
And blighted are the leaves that  
cast its shade;

Whilst the cold hand gathers its  
scanty fruit,

Whose chillness struck a canker to  
its root. 10

## II

I could stand

Upon thy shores, O Erin, and could  
count

The billows that, in their unceasing  
swell,

Dash on thy beach, and every wave  
might seem

An instrument in Time the giant's  
grasp, 15

To burst the barriers of Eternity.  
Proceed, thou giant, conquering and  
to conquer;

March on thy lonely way! The  
nations fall

Beneath thy noiseless footstep;  
pyramids

That for millenniums have defied  
the blast, 20

And laughed at lightnings, thou  
dost crush to nought.

Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp,  
Is but the fungus of a winter day

That thy light footstep presses into  
dust.

Thou art a conqueror, Time; all  
 things give way 25  
 Before thee but the 'fixed and vir-  
 tuous will';  
 The sacred sympathy of soul which  
 was  
 When thou wert not, which shall be  
 when thou perishest.

# ON ROBERT EMMET'S GRAVE

## VI

No trump tells thy virtues—the  
 grave where they rest  
 With thy dust shall remain un-  
 polluted by fame,  
 Till thy foes, by the world and by  
 fortune caressed,  
 Shall pass like a misè from the  
 light of thy name.

## VII

When the storm-cloud that lowers  
 o'er the day-beam is gone, 5  
 Unchanged, unextinguished its  
 life-spring will shine;  
 When Erin has ceased with their  
 memory to groan,  
 She will smile through the tears  
 of revival on thine.

# THE RETROSPECT: CWM ELAN, 1812

A SCENE, which 'wildered fancy  
 viewed  
 In the soul's coldest solitude,  
 With that same scene when peace-  
 ful love  
 Flings rapture's colour o'er the  
 grove,  
 When mountain, meadow, wood  
 and stream 5  
 With unalloying glory gleam,  
 And to the spirit's ear and eye  
 Are unison and harmony.

The moonlight was my dearer day;  
 Then would I wander far away, 10  
 And, lingering on the wild brook's  
 shore

To hear its unremitting roar,  
 Would lose in the ideal flow  
 All sense of overwhelming woe;  
 Or at the noiseless noon of night 15  
 Would climb some heathy moun-  
 tain's height,

And listen to the mystic sound  
 That stole in fitful gasps around.  
 I joyed to see the streaks of day  
 Above the purple peaks decay, 20  
 And watch the latest line of light  
 Just mingling with the shades of  
 night;

For day with me was time of woe  
 When even tears refused to flow;  
 Then would I stretch my languid  
 frame 25

Beneath the wild woods' gloomiest  
 shade,  
 And try to quench the ceaseless  
 flame

That on my withered vitals preyed;  
 Would close mine eyes and dream I  
 were

On some remote and friendless  
 plain, 30

And long to leave existence there,  
 If with it I might leave the pain  
 That with a finger cold and lean  
 Wrote madness on my withering  
 mien.

It was not unrequited love 35  
 That bade my 'wildered spirit rove;  
 'Twas not the pride disdaining life,  
 That with this mortal world at  
 strife

Would yield to the soul's inward  
 sense,

Then groan in human impotence, 40  
 And weep because it is not given  
 To taste on Earth the peace of  
 Heaven.

'Twas not that in the narrow sphere

Where Nature fixed my wayward  
fate

There was no friend or kindred dear  
Formed to become that spirit's  
mate, 46

Which, searching on tired pinion,  
found

Barren and cold repulse around;  
Oh, no! yet each one sorrow gave  
New graces to the narrow grave. 50

For broken vows had early quelled  
The stainless spirit's vestal flame;  
Yes! whilst the faithful bosom  
swelled,

Then the envenomed arrow came,  
And Apathy's unaltering eye 55  
Beamed coldness on the misery;  
And early I had learned to scorn  
The chains of clay that bound a  
soul

Panting to seize the wings of morn,  
And where its vital fires were born  
To soar, and spur the cold control  
Which the vile slaves of earthly  
night 62

Would twine around its struggling  
flight.

Oh, many were the friends whom  
fame

Had linked with the unmeaning  
name, 65

Whose magic marked among man-  
kind

The casket of my unknown mind,  
Which hidden from the vulgar glare  
Imbided no fleeting radiance there.  
My darksome spirit sought — it  
found 70

A friendless solitude around.

For who that might undaunted  
stand,

The saviour of a sinking land,  
Would crawl, its ruthless tyrant's  
slave,

And fatten upon Freedom's grave,  
Though doomed with her to perish,  
where 76

The captive clasps abhorred de-  
spair.

They could not share the bosom's  
feeling,

Which, passion's every throb re-  
vealing,

Dared force on the world's notice  
cold 80

Thoughts of unprofitable mould,  
Who bask in Custom's fickle ray,  
Fit sunshine of such wintry day!

They could not in a twilight walk  
Weave an impassioned web of talk,  
Till mysteries the spirits press 86

In wild yet tender awfulness,  
Then feel within our narrow sphere  
How little yet how great we are!

But they might shine in courtly  
glare, 90

Attract the rabble's cheapest stare,  
And might command where'er they  
move

A thing that bears the name of  
love;

They might be learned, witty, gay,  
Foremost in fashion's gilt array, 95  
On Fame's emblazoned pages

shine,  
Be princes' friends, but never  
mine!

Ye jagged peaks that frown sub-  
lime,

Mocking the blunted scythe of  
Time,

Whence I would watch its lustre  
pale 100

Steal from the moon o'er yonder  
vale

Thou rock, whose bosom black and  
vast,

Bared to the stream's unceasing  
flow,

Ever its giant shade doth cast  
On the tumultuous surge below: 105

Woods, to whose depths retires to  
die

The wounded Echo's melody,  
And whither this lone spirit bent  
The footstep of a wild intent:

Meadows! whose green and span-  
gled breast 110

These fevered limbs have often  
pressed,

Until the watchful fiend Despair  
Slept in the soothing coolness there!

Have not your varied beauties seen  
The sunken eye, the withering  
mien, 115

Sad traces of the unuttered pain  
That froze my heart and burned my  
brain.

How changed since Nature's sum-  
mer form

Had last the power my grief to  
charm,

Since last ye soothed my spirit's  
sadness, 120

Strange chaos of a mingled mad-  
ness!

Changed!—not the loathsome  
worm that fed

In the dark mansions of the dead,  
Now soaring through the fields of  
air,

And gathering purest nectar there,  
A butterfly, whose million hues 126

The dazzled eye of wonder views,  
Long lingering on a work so strange,

Has undergone so bright a change.  
How do I feel my happiness? 130

I cannot tell, but they may guess  
Whose every gloomy feeling gone,

Friendship and passion feel alone;  
Who see mortality's dull clouds

Before affection's murmur fly, 135  
Whilst the mild glances of her eye

Pierce the thin veil of flesh that  
shrouds

The spirit's inmost sanctuary.

O thou! whose virtues latest  
known,

First in this heart yet claim'st a  
throne; 140

Whose downy sceptre still shall  
share

The gentle sway with virtue there;  
Thou fair in form, and pure in  
mind,

Whose ardent friendship rivets  
fast

The flowery band our fates that  
bind, 145

Which incorruptible shall last

When duty's hard and cold control  
Has thawed around the burning  
soul,—

The gloomiest retrospects that  
bind

With crowns of thorn the bleeding  
mind, 150

The prospects of most doubtful  
hue

That rise on Fancy's shuddering  
view,—

Are gilt by the reviving ray  
Which thou hast flung upon my  
day.

## FRAGMENT OF A SONNET

TO HARRIET

EVER as now with Love and Vir-  
tue's glow

May thy unwithering soul not  
cease to burn,

Still may thine heart with those  
pure thoughts o'erflow

Which force from mine such quick  
and warm return.

TO HARRIET

It is not blasphemy to hope that  
Heaven

More perfectly will give those  
nameless joys

Which throb within the pulses of  
the blood

And sweeten all that bitterness  
which Earth

|                                                          |                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Infuses in the heaven-born soul. O<br>thou 5             | Of common souls lives but a sum-<br>mer's day;                        |
| Whose dear love gleamed upon the<br>gloomy path          | It dies, where it arose, upon this<br>earth.                          |
| Which this lone spirit travelled,<br>drear and cold,     | But ours! oh, 'tis the stretch of<br>Fancy's hope 30                  |
| Yet swiftly leading to those awful<br>limits             | To portray its continuance as now,<br>Warm, tranquil, spirit-healing; |
| Which mark the bounds of Time<br>and of the space        | nor when age                                                          |
| When Time shall be no more; wilt<br>thou not turn 10     | Has tempered these wild ecstasies,<br>and given                       |
| Those spirit-beaming eyes and look<br>on me,             | A soberer tinge to the luxurious<br>glow                              |
| Until I be assured that Earth is<br>Heaven,              | Which blazing on devotion's pin-<br>nacle 35                          |
| And Heaven is Earth?—will not<br>thy glowing cheek,      | Makes virtuous passion supersede<br>the power                         |
| Glowing with soft suffusion, rest<br>on mine,            | Of reason; nor when life's aestival<br>sun                            |
| And breathe magnetic sweetness<br>through the frame 15   | To deeper manhood shall have<br>ripened me;                           |
| Of my corporeal nature, through<br>the soul              | Nor when some years have added<br>judgement's store                   |
| Now knit with these fine fibres?<br>I would give         | To all thy woman sweetness, all<br>the fire 40                        |
| The longest and the happiest day<br>that fate            | Which throbs in thine enthusiast<br>heart; not then                   |
| Has marked on my existence but<br>to feel                | Shall holy friendship (for what<br>other name                         |
| <i>One</i> soul-reviving kiss... O thou<br>most dear, 20 | May love like ours assume?), not<br>even then                         |
| 'Tis an assurance that this Earth<br>is Heaven,          | Shall Custom so corrupt, or the<br>cold forms                         |
| And Heaven the flower of that un-<br>tainted seed        | Of this desolate world so harden<br>us, 45                            |
| Which springeth here beneath such<br>love as ours.       | As when we think of the dear<br>love that binds                       |
| Harriet! let death all mortal ties<br>dissolve,          | Our souls in soft communion, while<br>we know                         |
| But ours shall not be mortal! The<br>cold hand 25        | Each other's thoughts and feelings,<br>can we say                     |
| Of Time may chill the love of<br>earthly minds           | Unblushingly a heartless compli-<br>ment,                             |
| Half frozen now; the frigid inter-<br>course             | Praise, hate, or love with the un-<br>thinking world, 50              |
|                                                          | Or dare to cut the unrelaxing nerve                                   |

That knits our love to virtue. Can  
 those eyes,  
 Beaming with mildest radiance on  
 my heart  
 To purify its purity, e'er bend  
 To soothe its vice or consecrate its  
 fears? 55  
 Never, thou second Self! Is con-  
 fidence  
 So vain in virtue that I learn to  
 doubt  
 The mirror even of Truth? Dark  
 flood of Time,  
 Roll as it listeth thee; I measure  
 not  
 By month or moments thy am-  
 biguous course. 60  
 Another may stand by me on thy  
 brink,  
 And watch the bubble whirled be-  
 yond his ken,  
 Which pauses at my feet. The sense  
 of love,  
 The thirst for action, and the im-  
 passioned thought  
 Prolong my being; if I wake no  
 more, 65  
 My life more actual living will con-  
 tain  
 Than some gray veteran's of the  
 world's cold school,  
 Whose listless hours unprofitably  
 roll  
 By one enthusiast feeling unre-  
 deemed,  
 Virtue and Love! unbending Forti-  
 tude, 70  
 Freedom, Devotedness and Purity!  
 That life my Spirit consecrates to  
 you.

## SONNET

TO A BALLOON LADEN WITH  
 KNOWLEDGE

BRIGHT ball of flame that through  
 the gloom of even

Silently takest thine aethereal  
 way,  
 And with surpassing glory  
 dimm'st each ray  
 Twinkling amid the dark blue  
 depths of Heaven,—  
 Unlike the fire thou bearest, soon  
 shalt thou 5  
 Fade like a meteor in surround-  
 ing gloom,  
 Whilst that, unquenchable, is  
 doomed to glow  
 A watch-light by the patriot's  
 lonely tomb;  
 A ray of courage to the oppressed  
 and poor;  
 A spark, though gleaming on the  
 hovel's hearth, 10  
 Which through the tyrant's gilded  
 domes shall roar;  
 A beacon in the darkness of the  
 Earth;  
 A sun which, o'er the renovated  
 scene,  
 Shall dart like Truth where False-  
 hood yet has been.

## SONNET

ON LAUNCHING SOME BOTTLES  
 FILLED WITH KNOWLEDGE  
 INTO THE BRISTOL CHANNEL

VESSELS of heavenly medicine! may  
 the breeze  
 Auspicious waft your dark green  
 forms to shore;  
 Safe may ye stem the wide sur-  
 rounding roar  
 Of the wild whirlwinds and the rag-  
 ing seas;  
 And oh! if Liberty e'er deigned to  
 stoop 5  
 From yonder lowly throne her  
 crownless brow,  
 Sure she will breathe around your  
 emerald group



The fairest breezes of her West  
that blow.

Yes! she will waft ye to some free-  
born soul

Whose eye-beam, kindling as it  
meets your freight, 10

Her heaven-born flame in suffer-  
ing Earth will light,

Until its radiance gleams from pole  
to pole,

And tyrant-hearts with power-  
less envy burst

To see their night of ignorance  
dispersed.

## THE DEVIL'S WALK

### A BALLAD

#### I

ONCE, early in the morning,  
Beelzebub arose,  
With care his sweet person adorn-  
ing,  
He put on his Sunday clothes.

#### II

He drew on a boot to hide his  
hoof, 5

He drew on a glove to hide his  
claw,

His horns were concealed by a *Bras  
Chapeau*,

And the Devil went forth as natty  
a *Beau*

As Bond-street ever saw.

#### III

He sate him down, in London  
town, 10

Before earth's morning ray;

With a favourite imp he began to  
chat,

On religion, and scandal, this and  
that,

Until the dawn of day.

#### IV

And then to St. James's Court he  
went, 15

And St. Paul's Church he took on  
his way;

He was mighty thick with every  
Saint,

Though they were formal and he  
was gay.

#### V

The Devil was an agriculturist,  
And as bad weeds quickly  
grow, 20

In looking over his farm, I wist,  
He wouldn't find cause for  
woe.

#### VI

He peeped in each hole, to each  
chamber stole,

His promising live-stock to  
view;

Grinning applause, he just showed  
them his claws, 25

And they shrunk with affright from  
his ugly sight,

Whose work they delighted to  
do.

#### VII

Satan poked his red nose into  
crannies so small

One would think that the inno-  
cents fair,

Poor lambkins! were just doing  
nothing at all 30

But settling some dress or arrang-  
ing some ball,

But the Devil saw deeper  
there.

#### VIII

A Priest, at whose elbow the Devil  
during prayer

Sate familiarly, side by side,

Declared that, if the Tempter were  
there, 35

His presence he would not  
abide.

Ah! ah! thought Old Nick, that's a  
very stale trick,

For without the Devil, O favourite  
of Evil,

In your carriage you would  
not ride.

## IX

Satan next saw a brainless King, 40

Whose house was as hot as his  
own;

Many Imps in attendance were  
there on the wing,

They flapped the pennon and  
twisted the sting,

Close by the very Throne.

## X

Ah! ah! thought Satan, the pasture  
is good, 45

My Cattle will here thrive better  
than others;

They dine on news of human blood,  
They sup on the groans of the dy-  
ing and dead,

And supperless never will go to  
bed;

Which will make them fat as  
their brothers. 50

## XI

Fat as the Fiends that feed on  
blood,

Fresh and warm from the fields  
of Spain,

Where Ruin ploughs her gory  
way,

Where the shoots of earth are  
nipped in the bud,

Where Hell is the Victor's  
prey, 55

Its glory the meed of the slain.

## XII

Fat—as the Death-birds on Erin's  
shore,

That glutted themselves in her  
dearest gore,

And flitted round Castlereagh,

When they snatched the Patriot's  
heart, that *his* grasp 60

Had torn from its widow's maniac  
clasp,

And fled at the dawn of day.

## XIII

Fat—as the Reptiles of the tomb,

That riot in corruption's spoil,

That fret their little hour in  
gloom, 65

And creep, and live the while.

## XIV

Fat as that Prince's maudlin brain,  
Which, addled by some gilded  
toy,

Tired, gives his sweetmeat, and  
again

Cries for it, like a humoured  
boy. 70

## XV

For he is fat,—his waistcoat gay,  
When strained upon a levee day,  
Scarce meets across his princely  
paunch;

And pantaloons are like half-moons  
Upon each brawny haunch. 75

## XVI

How vast his stock of calf! when  
plenty

Had filled his empty head and  
heart,

Enough to satiate foplings twenty,  
Could make his pantaloons seams  
start.

## XVII

The Devil (who sometimes is called  
Nature), 80  
For men of power provides thus  
well,  
Whilst every change and every fea-  
ture,  
Their great original can tell.

## XVIII

Satan saw a lawyer a viper slay,  
That crawled up the leg of his  
table, 85  
It reminded him most marvellously  
Of the story of Cain and Abel.

## XIX

The wealthy yeoman, as he wan-  
ders  
His fertile fields among,  
And on his thriving cattle pon-  
ders, 90  
Counts his sure gains, and hums  
a song;  
Thus did the Devil, through earth  
walking,  
Hum low a hellish song.

## XX

For they thrive well whose garb of  
gore  
Is Satan's choicest livery, 95  
And they thrive well who from the  
poor  
Have snatched the bread of  
penury,  
And heap the houseless wanderer's  
store  
On the rank pile of luxury.

## XXI

The Bishops thrive, though they  
are big; 100  
The Lawyers thrive, though they  
are thin;

For every gown, and every wig,  
Hides the safe thrift of Hell  
within.

## XXII

Thus pigs were never counted  
clean,  
Although they dine on finest  
corn; 105  
And cormorants are sin-like lean,  
Although they eat from night to  
morn.

## XXIII

Oh! why is the Father of Hell in  
such glee,  
As he grins from ear to ear?  
Why does he doff his clothes joy-  
fully, 110  
As he skips, and prances, and  
flaps his wing,  
As he sidles, leers, and twirls his  
sting,  
And dares, as he is, to appear?

## XXIV

A statesman passed—alone to him,  
The Devil dare his whole shape  
uncover, 115  
To show each feature, every limb,  
Secure of an unchanging lover.

## XXV

At this known sign, a welcome  
sight,  
The watchful demons sought  
their King,  
And every Fiend of the Stygian  
night, 120  
Was in an instant on the wing.

## XXVI

Pale Loyalty, his guilt-steeled  
brow,  
With wreaths of gory laurel  
crowned:

The hell-hounds, Murder, Want  
and Woe,  
Forever hungering, flocked  
around; 125  
From Spain had Satan sought their  
food,  
'Twas human woe and human  
blood!

## XXVII

Hark! the earthquake's crash I  
hear,—  
Kings turn pale, and Conquerors  
start,  
Ruffians tremble in their fear, 130  
For their Satan doth depart.

## XXVIII

This day Fiends give to revelry  
To celebrate their King's return,  
And with delight its Sire to see  
Hell's adamantine limits burn.

## XXIX

But were the Devil's sight as keen  
As Reason's penetrating eye, 137  
His sulphurous Majesty I ween,  
Would find but little cause for  
joy.

## XXX

For the sons of Reason see 140  
That, ere fate consume the Pole,  
The false Tyrant's cheek shall be  
Bloodless as his coward soul.

## FRAGMENT OF A SONNET

## FAREWELL TO NORTH DEVON

Where man's profane and tainting  
hand  
Nature's primæval loveliness has  
marred,  
And some few souls of the high  
bliss debarred

Which else obey her powerful com-  
mand;

. . . mountain piles 5  
That load in grandeur Cambria's  
emerald vales.

ON LEAVING LONDON FOR  
WALES

HAIL to thee, Cambria; for the  
unfettered wind

Which from thy wilds even now  
methinks I feel,

Chasing the clouds that roll in  
wrath behind,

And tightening the soul's laxest  
nerves to steel;

True mountain Liberty alone  
may heal 5

The pain which Custom's obdur-  
acies bring,

And he who dares in fancy even  
to steal

One draught from Snowdon's  
ever sacred spring

Blots out the unholyest rede of  
worldly witnessing.

And shall that soul, to selfish  
peace resigned, 10

So soon forget the woe its fellows  
share?

Can Snowdon's Lethe from the  
free-born mind

So soon the page of injured pen-  
ury tear?

Does this fine mass of human  
passion dare

To sleep, unhonouring the patri-  
ot's fall, 15

Or life's sweet load in quietude  
to bear

While millions famish even in  
Luxury's hall,

And Tyranny, high raised, stern  
lowers on all?

No, Cambria! never may thy  
matchless vales

A heart so false to hope and virtue shield; 20  
 Nor ever may thy spirit-breathing gales  
 Waft freshness to the slaves who dare to yield.  
 For me! . . . the weapon that I burn to wield  
 I seek amid thy rocks to ruin hurled,  
 That Reason's flag may over Freedom's field, 25  
 Symbol of bloodless victory, wave unfurled,  
 A meteor-sign of love effulgent o'er the world.

Do thou, wild Cambria, calm each struggling thought;  
 Cast thy sweet veil of rocks and woods between,  
 That by the soul to indignation wrought 30  
 Mountains and dells be mingled with the scene;  
 Let me forever be what I have been,  
 But not forever at my needy door  
 Let Misery linger speechless, pale and lean;  
 I am the friend of the unfriended poor,— 35  
 Let me not madly stain their righteous cause in gore.

#### THE WANDERING JEW'S SOLILOQUY

Is it the Eternal Triune, is it He  
 Who dares arrest the wheels of destiny  
 And plunge me in the lowest Hell of Hells?  
 Will not the lightning's blast destroy my frame?  
 Will not steel drink the blood-life where it swells? 5

No—let me hie where dark Destruction dwells,  
 To rouse her from her deeply caverned lair,  
 And, taunting her cursed sluggishness to ire,  
 Light long Oblivion's death-torch at its flame  
 And calmly mount Annihilation's pyre. 10  
 Tyrant of Earth! pale Misery's jackal Thou!  
 Are there no stores of vengeful violent fate  
 Within the magazines of Thy fierce hate?  
 No poison in the clouds to bathe a brow  
 That lowers on Thee with desperate contempt? 15  
 Where is the noonday Pestilence that slew  
 The myriad sons of Israel's favoured nation?  
 Where the destroying Minister that flew  
 Pouring the fiery tide of desolation  
 Upon the leagued Assyrian's attempt? 20  
 Where the dark Earthquake-daemon who engorged  
 At the dread word Korah's unconscious crew?  
 Or the Angel's two-edged sword of fire that urged  
 Our primal parents from their bower of bliss  
 (Reared by Thine hand) for errors not their own 25  
 By Thine omniscient mind foredoomed, foreknown?  
 Yes! I would court a ruin such as this,  
 Almighty Tyrant! and give thanks to Thee—  
 Drink deeply—drain the cup of hate; remit this—I may die.

## EVENING

TO HARRIET

O THOU bright Sun! beneath the  
 dark blue line  
 Of western distance that sublime  
 descendest,  
 And, gleaming lovelier as thy  
 beams decline,  
 Thy million hues to every vapour  
 lendest,  
 And, over cobweb lawn and grove  
 and stream 5  
 Sheddest the liquid magic of thy  
 light,  
 Till calm Earth, with the parting  
 splendour bright,  
 Shows like the vision of a  
 beauteous dream;  
 What gazer now with astronomic  
 eye  
 Could coldly count the spots  
 within thy sphere? 10  
 Such were thy lover, Harriet,  
 could he fly  
 The thoughts of all that makes his  
 passion dear,  
 And, turning senseless from thy  
 warm caress,  
 Pick flaws in our close-woven  
 happiness.

TO IANTHE

I LOVE thee, Baby! for thine own  
 sweet sake;  
 Those azure eyes, that faintly  
 dimpled cheek,  
 Thy tender frame, so eloquently  
 weak,  
 Love in the sternest heart of hate  
 might wake;  
 But more when o'er thy fitful slum-  
 ber bending 5  
 Thy mother folds thee to her  
 wakeful heart,  
 Whilst love and pity, in her  
 glances blending,

All that thy passive eyes can feel  
 impart:  
 More, when some feeble lineaments  
 of her,  
 Who bore thy weight beneath her  
 spotless bosom, 10  
 As with deep love I read thy  
 face, recur,—  
 More dear art thou, O fair and  
 fragile blossom;  
 Dearest when most thy tender  
 traits express  
 The image of thy mother's love-  
 liness.

SONG FROM  
THE WANDERING JEW

SEE yon opening flower  
 Spreads its fragrance to the  
 blast;  
 It fades within an hour,  
 Its decay is pale—is fast.  
 Paler is yon maiden; 5  
 Faster is her heart's decay;  
 Deep with sorrow laden,  
 She sinks in death away.

FRAGMENT FROM THE  
WANDERING JEW

THE Elements respect their Mak-  
 er's seal!  
 Still like the scathèd pine tree's  
 height,  
 Braving the tempests of the  
 night  
 Have I 'scaped the flickering flame.  
 Like the scathèd pine, which a  
 monument stands 5  
 Of faded grandeur, which the  
 brands  
 Of the tempest-shaken air  
 Have riven on the desolate heath;  
 Yet it stands majestic even in  
 death,  
 And rears its wild form there. 10

TO THE QUEEN OF MY  
HEART

## I

SHALL we roam, my love,  
To the twilight grove,  
When the moon is rising bright;  
Oh, I'll whisper there,  
In the cool night-air, 5  
What I dare not in broad daylight!

## II

I'll tell thee a part  
Of the thoughts that start  
To being when thou art nigh;  
And thy beauty, more bright 10  
Than the stars' soft light,  
Shall seem as a weft from the sky.

## III

When the pale moonbeam  
On tower and stream  
Sheds a flood of silver sheen, 15  
How I love to gaze  
As the cold ray strays  
O'er thy face, my heart's throned  
queen!

## IV

Wilt thou roam with me  
To the restless sea, 20  
And linger upon the steep,  
And list to the flow  
Of the waves below  
How they toss and roar and leap?

## V

Those boiling waves, 25  
And the storm that raves  
At night o'er their foaming crest,  
Resemble the strife  
That, from earliest life,  
The passions have waged in my  
breast. 30

## VI

Oh, come, then, and rove  
To the sea or the grove,  
When the moon is rising bright;  
And I'll whisper there,  
In the cool night-air, 35  
What I dare not in broad day-  
light.





# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

|                                                                 | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| A cat in distress . . . . .                                     | 854  |
| A gentle story of two lovers young . . . . .                    | 623  |
| A glorious people vibrated again . . . . .                      | 642  |
| A golden-winged Angel stood . . . . .                           | 587  |
| A Hater he came and sat by a ditch . . . . .                    | 588  |
| A man who was about to hang himself . . . . .                   | 763  |
| A pale Dream came to a Lady fair . . . . .                      | 576  |
| A portal as of shadowy adamant . . . . .                        | 662  |
| A rainbow's arch stood on the sea . . . . .                     | 246  |
| A scene, which 'wilder'd fancy viewed . . . . .                 | 894  |
| A Sensitive Plant in a garden grew . . . . .                    | 627  |
| A shovel of his ashes took . . . . .                            | 575  |
| A widow bird sate mourning . . . . .                            | 435  |
| A woodman whose rough heart was out of tune . . . . .           | 601  |
| Ah! faint are her limbs, and her footstep is weary . . . . .    | 878  |
| Ah! grasp the dire dagger and couch the fell spear . . . . .    | 865  |
| Ah! quit me not yet, for the wind whistles shrill . . . . .     | 869  |
| Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing . . . . .            | 248  |
| Ah! sweet is the moonbeam that sleeps on yon fountain . . . . . | 866  |
| Alas! for Liberty! . . . . .                                    | 531  |
| Alas, good friend, what profit can you see . . . . .            | 664  |
| Alas! this is not what I thought life was . . . . .             | 672  |
| Ambition, power, and avarice, now have hurled . . . . .         | 880  |
| Amid the desolation of a city . . . . .                         | 662  |
| Among the guests who often stayed . . . . .                     | 384  |
| An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king . . . . .          | 613  |
| And can'st thou mock mine agony, thus calm . . . . .            | 884  |
| And earnest to explore within—around . . . . .                  | 769  |
| And ever as he went he swept a lyre . . . . .                   | 499  |
| And, if my grief should still be dearer to me . . . . .         | 540  |
| And like a dying lady, lean and pale . . . . .                  | 660  |
| And many there were hurt by that strong boy . . . . .           | 685  |
| And Peter Bell, when he had been . . . . .                      | 376  |
| And said I that all hope was fled . . . . .                     | 864  |
| And that I walk thus proudly crowned withal . . . . .           | 698  |
| And the cloven waters like a chasm of mountains . . . . .       | 766  |
| And when the old man saw that on the green . . . . .            | 183  |
| And where is truth? On tombs? for such to thee . . . . .        | 624  |
| And who feels discord now or sorrow? . . . . .                  | 627  |
| Arethusa arose . . . . .                                        | 649  |
| Ariel to Miranda:—Take . . . . .                                | 710  |
| Arise, arise, arise! . . . . .                                  | 614  |
| Art thou indeed forever gone . . . . .                          | 887  |
| Art thou pale for weariness . . . . .                           | 660  |
| As a violet's gentle eye . . . . .                              | 626  |
| As from an ancestral oak . . . . .                              | 611  |
| As I lay asleep in Italy . . . . .                              | 366  |
| As the sunrise to the night . . . . .                           | 625  |

|                                                                  |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Ask not the pallid stranger's woe . . . . .                      | 863 |
| At the creation of the Earth . . . . .                           | 622 |
| Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon . . . . .                | 559 |
| Bear witness, Erin! when thine injured isle . . . . .            | 893 |
| Before those cruel Twins, whom at one birth . . . . .            | 444 |
| Beside the dimness of the glimmering sea . . . . .               | 104 |
| Best and brightest, come away! . . . . .                         | 706 |
| Break the dance, and scatter the song . . . . .                  | 283 |
| Bright ball of flame that through the gloom of even . . . . .    | 808 |
| Bright clouds float in heaven . . . . .                          | 279 |
| Bright wanderer, fair coquette of Heaven . . . . .               | 713 |
| Brothers! between you and me . . . . .                           | 892 |
| 'Buona notte, buona notte!'—Come mai . . . . .                   | 665 |
| By the mossy brink . . . . .                                     | 890 |
| Chameleons feed on light and air . . . . .                       | 618 |
| Cold, cold is the blast when December is howling . . . . .       | 802 |
| Come, be happy!—sit near me . . . . .                            | 598 |
| Come [Harriet]! sweet is the hour . . . . .                      | 863 |
| Come hither, my sweet Rosalind . . . . .                         | 186 |
| Come, thou awakener of the spirit's ocean . . . . .              | 698 |
| Corpses are cold in the tomb . . . . .                           | 610 |
| Dares the lama, most fleet of the sons of the wind . . . . .     | 888 |
| Darkness has dawned in the East . . . . .                        | 532 |
| Dar'st thou amid the varied multitude . . . . .                  | 857 |
| Daughters of Jove, whose voice is melody . . . . .               | 741 |
| Dear home, thou scene of earliest hopes and joys . . . . .       | 594 |
| Dearest, best and brightest . . . . .                            | 709 |
| Death is here and death is there . . . . .                       | 660 |
| Death! where is thy victory? . . . . .                           | 857 |
| Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end? . . . . .                | 347 |
| Do you not hear the Aziola cry? . . . . .                        | 680 |
| Eagle! why soarest thou above that tomb? . . . . .               | 763 |
| Earth, ocean, air, beloved brotherhood . . . . .                 | 2   |
| Echoes we: listen! . . . . .                                     | 253 |
| Ever as now with Love and Virtue's glow . . . . .                | 850 |
| Faint with love, the Lady of the South . . . . .                 | 698 |
| Fairest of the Destinies . . . . .                               | 686 |
| False friend, wilt thou smile or weep . . . . .                  | 358 |
| Far, far away, O ye . . . . .                                    | 676 |
| Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind . . . . .            | 235 |
| Fierce roars the midnight storm . . . . .                        | 866 |
| Flourishing vine, whose kindling clusters glow . . . . .         | 609 |
| Follow to the deep wood's weeds . . . . .                        | 622 |
| For me, my friend, if not that tears did tremble . . . . .       | 587 |
| For my dagger is bathed in the blood of the brave . . . . .      | 855 |
| For your letter, dear [Hattie], accept my best thanks . . . . .  | 860 |
| From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended . . . . .      | 240 |
| From the cities where from caves . . . . .                       | 626 |
| From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth . . . . . | 240 |
| From the forests and highlands . . . . .                         | 652 |
| From unremembered ages we . . . . .                              | 245 |
| Gather, O gather . . . . .                                       | 614 |
| Ghosts of the dead! have I not heard your yelling . . . . .      | 875 |

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

909

PAGE

|                                                             |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| God prosper, speed, and save . . . . .                      | 613 |
| Good-night? ah! no; the hour is ill . . . . .               | 665 |
| Great Spirit whom the sea of boundless thought . . . . .    | 699 |
| Guido, I would that Lapo, thou, and I . . . . .             | 767 |
| Hail to thee, blithe Spirit! . . . . .                      | 640 |
| Hail to thee, Cambria! for the unfettered wind . . . . .    | 902 |
| Hark! the owl flaps her wing . . . . .                      | 871 |
| Hark! the owl flaps his wings . . . . .                     | 855 |
| Hast thou not seen, officious with delight . . . . .        | 789 |
| He came like a dream in the dawn of life . . . . .          | 539 |
| He wanders, like a day-appearing dream . . . . .            | 697 |
| Hell is a city much like London . . . . .                   | 379 |
| Her hair was brown, her spherèd eyes were brown . . . . .   | 185 |
| Her voice did quiver as we parted . . . . .                 | 585 |
| Here I sit with my paper, my pen and my ink . . . . .       | 858 |
| 'Here lieth One whose name was writ on water' . . . . .     | 697 |
| Here, my dear friend, is a new book for you . . . . .       | 479 |
| Here, oh, here . . . . .                                    | 278 |
| Hic sinu fessum caput hospitali . . . . .                   | 855 |
| His face was like a snake's—wrinkled and loose . . . . .    | 671 |
| Honey from silkworms who can gather . . . . .               | 588 |
| Hopes, that swell in youthful breasts . . . . .             | 858 |
| How eloquent are eyes . . . . .                             | 858 |
| How, my dear Mary,—are you critic-bitten . . . . .          | 443 |
| How stern are the woes of the desolate mourner . . . . .    | 878 |
| How sweet it is to sit and read the tales . . . . .         | 624 |
| How swiftly through Heaven's wide expanse . . . . .         | 877 |
| How wonderful is Death . . . . .                            | 19  |
| How wonderful is Death . . . . .                            | 805 |
| I am afraid these verses will not please you, but . . . . . | 696 |
| I am as a spirit who has dwelt . . . . .                    | 623 |
| I am drunk with the honey wine . . . . .                    | 625 |
| I arise from dreams of thee . . . . .                       | 618 |
| I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers . . . . .   | 638 |
| I dreamed that, as I wandered by the way . . . . .          | 652 |
| I dreamed that Milton's spirit rose, and took . . . . .     | 672 |
| I faint, I perish with my love! I grow . . . . .            | 698 |
| I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden . . . . .                  | 649 |
| I hated thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan . . . . .          | 565 |
| I love thee, Baby! for thine own sweet sake . . . . .       | 904 |
| I loved—alas! our life is love . . . . .                    | 598 |
| I met a traveller from an antique land . . . . .            | 589 |
| I mourn Adonis dead—loveliest Adonis . . . . .              | 763 |
| I pant for the music which is divine . . . . .              | 696 |
| I rode one evening with Count Maddalo . . . . .             | 210 |
| I sate beside a sage's bed . . . . .                        | 246 |
| I sate beside the Steersman then, and gazing . . . . .      | 128 |
| I sing the glorious Power with azure eyes . . . . .         | 743 |
| I stood upon a heaven-cleaving turret . . . . .             | 700 |
| I stood within the City disinterred . . . . .               | 655 |
| I weep for Adonais—he is dead! . . . . .                    | 485 |
| I went into the deserts of dim sleep . . . . .              | 671 |
| I would not be a king—enough . . . . .                      | 687 |
| If gibbets, axes, confiscations, chains . . . . .           | 664 |
| If I esteemed you less, Envy would kill . . . . .           | 696 |
| If I walk in Autumn's even . . . . .                        | 697 |

|                                                          |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| In the cave which wild weeds cover . . . . .             | 625 |
| In the sweet solitude of this calm place . . . . .       | 772 |
| Inter marmoreas Leonorae pendula colles . . . . .        | 855 |
| Is it that in some brighter sphere . . . . .             | 623 |
| Is it the Eternal Triune, is it He . . . . .             | 903 |
| Is not to-day enough? Why do I peer . . . . .            | 623 |
| It is not blasphemy to hope that Heaven . . . . .        | 806 |
| It is the day when all the sons of God . . . . .         | 503 |
| It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky . . . . .           | 621 |
| It was a bright and cheerful afternoon . . . . .         | 661 |
| Kissing Helena, together . . . . .                       | 763 |
| Let there be light! said Liberty . . . . .               | 524 |
| Let those who pine in pride or in revenge . . . . .      | 603 |
| Life of Life! thy lips enkindle . . . . .                | 264 |
| Lift not the painted veil which those who live . . . . . | 608 |
| Like the ghost of a dear friend dead . . . . .           | 671 |
| Listen, listen, Mary mine . . . . .                      | 591 |
| Lo, Peter in Hell's Grosvenor Square . . . . .           | 382 |
| Madonna, wherefore hast thou sent to me . . . . .        | 676 |
| Maiden, quench the glare of sorrow . . . . .             | 890 |
| Many a green isle needs must be . . . . .                | 592 |
| Melodious Arethusa, o'er my verse . . . . .              | 765 |
| Men of England, wherefore plough . . . . .               | 610 |
| Metnought I was a billow in the crowd . . . . .          | 697 |
| Mighty eagle! thou that soarest . . . . .                | 581 |
| Mine eyes were dim with tears unshed . . . . .           | 561 |
| Monarch of Gods and Daemons, and all Spirits . . . . .   | 228 |
| Month after month the gathered rains descend . . . . .   | 501 |
| Moonbeam, leave the shadowy vale . . . . .               | 856 |
| Muse, sing the deeds of golden Aphrodite . . . . .       | 744 |
| Music, when soft voices die . . . . .                    | 678 |
| My coursers are fed with the lightning . . . . .         | 263 |
| My dearest Mary, wherefore hast thou gone . . . . .      | 620 |
| My faint spirit was sitting in the light . . . . .       | 676 |
| My head is heavy, my limbs are weary . . . . .           | 671 |
| My head is wild with weeping for a grief . . . . .       | 608 |
| My lost William, thou in whom . . . . .                  | 620 |
| My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few . . . . .    | 464 |
| My soul is an enchanted boat . . . . .                   | 265 |
| My spirit like a charmed bark doth swim . . . . .        | 580 |
| My thoughts arise and fade in solitude . . . . .         | 588 |
| My wings are folded o'er mine ears . . . . .             | 234 |
| Night, with all thine eyes look down! . . . . .          | 684 |
| Night! with all thine eyes look down! . . . . .          | 685 |
| No access to the Duke! You have not said . . . . .       | 597 |
| No, Music, thou art not the 'food of Love' . . . . .     | 581 |
| No trump tells thy virtues . . . . .                     | 894 |
| Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame . . . . .           | 680 |
| Not far from hence. From yonder pointed hill . . . . .   | 666 |
| Now had the loophole of that dungeon, still . . . . .    | 770 |
| Now the last day of many days . . . . .                  | 707 |
| O Bacchus, what a world of toil, both now . . . . .      | 745 |
| O happy Earth! reality of Heaven . . . . .               | 26  |

|                                                               |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| O Mary dear, that you were here . . . . .                     | 592 |
| O mighty mind, in whose deep stream this age . . . . .        | 608 |
| O pillow cold and wet with tears! . . . . .                   | 619 |
| O Slavery! thou frost of the world's prime . . . . .          | 524 |
| O that a chariot of cloud were mine! . . . . .                | 587 |
| O that mine enemy had written . . . . .                       | 386 |
| O thou bright Sun! beneath the dark blue line . . . . .       | 904 |
| O thou immortal deity . . . . .                               | 699 |
| O thou, who plumed with strong desire . . . . .               | 653 |
| O universal Mother, who dost keep . . . . .                   | 743 |
| O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being . . . . .     | 616 |
| O world! O life! O time! . . . . .                            | 681 |
| Offspring of Jove, Calliope, once more . . . . .              | 742 |
| Oh! did you observe the Black Canon pass . . . . .            | 867 |
| Oh! take the pure gem to where southerly breezes . . . . .    | 888 |
| Oh! there are spirits of the air . . . . .                    | 564 |
| Oh! what is the gain of restless care . . . . .               | 865 |
| On a battle-trumpet's blast . . . . .                         | 246 |
| On a poet's lips I slept . . . . .                            | 247 |
| On the brink of the night and the morning . . . . .           | 263 |
| Once, early in the morning . . . . .                          | 899 |
| One sung of thee who left the tale untold . . . . .           | 625 |
| One word is too often profaned . . . . .                      | 685 |
| Orphan Hours, the Year is dead . . . . .                      | 674 |
| Our boat is asleep on Serchio's stream . . . . .              | 693 |
| Our spoil is won . . . . .                                    | 282 |
| Over the utmost hill at length I sped . . . . .               | 87  |
| Palace-roof of cloudless nights! . . . . .                    | 614 |
| Pan loved his neighbour Echo—but that child . . . . .         | 765 |
| People of England, ye who toil and groan . . . . .            | 612 |
| Peter Bells, one, two and three . . . . .                     | 376 |
| Place, for the Marshal of the Masque! . . . . .               | 416 |
| Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know . . . . .              | 565 |
| Prince Athanase had one beloved friend . . . . .              | 180 |
| Rarely, rarely, comest thou . . . . .                         | 678 |
| Reach me that handkerchief!—My brain is hurt . . . . .        | 322 |
| Returning from its daily quest, my Spirit . . . . .           | 772 |
| Rome has fallen, ye see it lying . . . . .                    | 626 |
| Rough wind, that moanest loud . . . . .                       | 712 |
| Sacred Goddess, Mother Earth . . . . .                        | 650 |
| See yon opening flower . . . . .                              | 904 |
| Serene in his unconquerable might . . . . .                   | 672 |
| Shall we roam, my love . . . . .                              | 905 |
| She comes not; yet I left her even now . . . . .              | 334 |
| She left me at the silent time . . . . .                      | 712 |
| She saw me not—she heard me not—alone . . . . .               | 156 |
| She was an aged woman; and the years . . . . .                | 891 |
| Silence! Oh, well are Death and Sleep and Thou . . . . .      | 608 |
| Silver key of the fountain of tears . . . . .                 | 580 |
| Sing, Muse, the son of Maia and of Jove . . . . .             | 719 |
| Sleep, sleep on! forget thy pain . . . . .                    | 705 |
| So now my summer task is ended, Mary . . . . .                | 39  |
| So we sate joyous as the morning ray . . . . .                | 118 |
| Stern, stern is the voice of fate's fearful command . . . . . | 866 |
| Such hope, as is the sick despair of good . . . . .           | 671 |

|                                                              |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Such was Zonoras; and as daylight finds . . . . .            | 181 |
| Summer was dead and Autumn was expiring . . . . .            | 703 |
| Sweet Spirit! Sister of that orphan one . . . . .            | 464 |
| Sweet star, which gleaming o'er the darksome scene . . . . . | 890 |
| Swift as a spirit hastening to his task . . . . .            | 545 |
| Swifter far than summer's flight . . . . .                   | 681 |
| Swiftly walk o'er the western wave . . . . .                 | 675 |
| <br>                                                         |     |
| Tell me, thou Star, whose wings of light . . . . .           | 663 |
| That matter of the murder is hushed up . . . . .             | 303 |
| That night we anchored in a woody bay . . . . .              | 135 |
| That time is dead for ever, child! . . . . .                 | 585 |
| The awful shadow of some unseen Power . . . . .              | 569 |
| The babe is at peace within the womb . . . . .               | 698 |
| The billows on the beach are leaping around it . . . . .     | 583 |
| The cold earth slept below . . . . .                         | 566 |
| The curtain of the Universe . . . . .                        | 504 |
| The death-bell beats! . . . . .                              | 876 |
| The death knell is ringing . . . . .                         | 700 |
| The Devil, I safely can aver . . . . .                       | 378 |
| The Devil now knew his proper cue . . . . .                  | 390 |
| The Elements respect their Maker's seal! . . . . .           | 904 |
| The everlasting universe of things . . . . .                 | 571 |
| The fierce beasts of the woods and wildernesses . . . . .    | 608 |
| The fiery mountains answer each other . . . . .              | 661 |
| The fitful alternations of the rain . . . . .                | 625 |
| The flower that smiles to-day . . . . .                      | 679 |
| The fountains mingle with the river . . . . .                | 622 |
| The gentleness of rain was in the wind . . . . .             | 698 |
| The golden gates of Sleep unbar . . . . .                    | 684 |
| The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness . . . . .     | 286 |
| The keen stars were twinkling . . . . .                      | 711 |
| The odour from the flower is gone . . . . .                  | 592 |
| The old man took the oars, and soon the bark . . . . .       | 70  |
| The pale stars are gone . . . . .                            | 278 |
| The pale stars of the morn . . . . .                         | 242 |
| The pale, the cold, and the moony smile . . . . .            | 562 |
| The path through which that lovely twain . . . . .           | 254 |
| The rose that drinks the fountain dew . . . . .              | 580 |
| The rude wind is singing . . . . .                           | 699 |
| The season was the childhood of sweet June . . . . .         | 669 |
| The serpent is shut out from Paradise . . . . .              | 682 |
| The sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie . . . . .          | 650 |
| The spider spreads her webs, whether she be . . . . .        | 436 |
| The starlight smile of children, the sweet looks . . . . .   | 58  |
| The stars may dissolve, and the fountain of light . . . . .  | 865 |
| The sun is set; the swallows are asleep . . . . .            | 692 |
| The sun is warm, the sky is clear . . . . .                  | 600 |
| The sun makes music as of old . . . . .                      | 790 |
| The transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness . . . . .   | 163 |
| The viewless and invisible Consequence . . . . .             | 671 |
| The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth . . . . .       | 279 |
| The warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing . . . . . | 659 |
| The waters are flashing . . . . .                            | 677 |
| The wind has swept from the wide atmosphere . . . . .        | 563 |
| The world is dreary . . . . .                                | 620 |
| The world is now our dwelling-place . . . . .                | 584 |
| The world's great age begins anew . . . . .                  | 533 |

|                                                               | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Then weave the web of the mystic measure . . . . .            | 282  |
| There is a warm and gentle atmosphere . . . . .               | 623  |
| There late was One within whose subtle being . . . . .        | 568  |
| There was a little lawny islet . . . . .                      | 713  |
| There was a youth, who, as with toil and travel . . . . .     | 176  |
| These are two friends whose lives were undivided . . . . .    | 714  |
| They die—the dead return not—Misery . . . . .                 | 585  |
| Those whom nor power, nor lying faith, nor toil . . . . .     | 586  |
| Thou art fair, and few are fairer . . . . .                   | 619  |
| Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all . . . . .          | 184  |
| Thou living light that in thy rainbow hues . . . . .          | 672  |
| Thou supreme Goddess! by whose power divine . . . . .         | 394  |
| Thou wert not, Cassius, and thou couldst not be . . . . .     | 586  |
| Thou wert the morning star among the living . . . . .         | 762  |
| Thrice three hundred thousand years . . . . .                 | 230  |
| Thus to be lost and thus to sink and die . . . . .            | 579  |
| Thy beauty hangs around thee like . . . . .                   | 699  |
| Thy country's curse is on thee, darkest crest . . . . .       | 531  |
| Thy dewy looks sink in my breast . . . . .                    | 559  |
| Thy little footsteps on the sands . . . . .                   | 620  |
| Thy look of love has power to calm . . . . .                  | 560  |
| 'Tis midnight now—athwart the murky air . . . . .             | 881  |
| 'Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail . . . . .    | 634  |
| To me this world's a dreary blank . . . . .                   | 863  |
| To the deep, to the deep . . . . .                            | 258  |
| To thirst and find no fill—to wail and wander . . . . .       | 588  |
| Tremble, Kings despised of man . . . . .                      | 887  |
| 'Twas at the season when the Earth upsprings . . . . .        | 183  |
| 'Twas at this season that Prince Athanase . . . . .           | 184  |
| 'Twas dead of the night when I sate in my dwelling . . . . .  | 874  |
| 'Twas dead of the night, when I sat in my dwelling . . . . .  | 875  |
| Unfathomable Sea! whose waves are years . . . . .             | 675  |
| Unrisen splendour of the brightest sun . . . . .              | 672  |
| Vessels of heavenly medicine! may the breeze . . . . .        | 898  |
| Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream . . . . .               | 530  |
| Wake the serpent not—lest he . . . . .                        | 624  |
| Was there a human spirit in the steed . . . . .               | 144  |
| We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon . . . . .        | 562  |
| We come from the mind . . . . .                               | 281  |
| We join the throng . . . . .                                  | 280  |
| We meet not as we parted . . . . .                            | 713  |
| We strew these opiate flowers . . . . .                       | 507  |
| Wealth and dominion fade into the mass . . . . .              | 588  |
| Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze . . . . .          | 280  |
| Weep not, my gentle boy; he struck but me . . . . .           | 313  |
| What! alive and so bold, O Earth? . . . . .                   | 679  |
| What art thou, Presumptuous, who profanest . . . . .          | 699  |
| What Mary is when she a little smiles . . . . .               | 770  |
| What men gain fairly—that they should possess . . . . .       | 612  |
| 'What think you the dead are?' . . . . .                      | 224  |
| What thoughts had sway o'er Cythna's lonely slumber . . . . . | 70   |
| What was the shriek that struck Fancy's ear . . . . .         | 885  |
| When a lover clasps his fairest . . . . .                     | 624  |
| When May is painting with her colours gay . . . . .           | 609  |
| When passion's trance is overpast . . . . .                   | 683  |

|                                                             |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| When soft winds and sunny skies . . . . .                   | 698 |
| When the lamp is shattered . . . . .                        | 706 |
| When the last hope of trampled France had failed . . . . .  | 42  |
| When winds that move not its calm surface sweep . . . . .   | 764 |
| Where art thou, beloved To-morrow? . . . . .                | 697 |
| Where man's profane and tainting hand . . . . .             | 902 |
| Whose is the love that gleaming through the world . . . . . | 804 |
| Why is it said thou canst not live . . . . .                | 889 |
| Wild, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one . . . . .      | 687 |
| Wilt thou forget the happy hours . . . . .                  | 591 |
| Worlds on worlds are rolling ever . . . . .                 | 512 |
| Would I were the wingèd cloud . . . . .                     | 523 |
| Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share . . . . .        | 266 |
| Ye Dorian woods and waves, lament aloud . . . . .           | 764 |
| Ye gentle visitations of calm thought . . . . .             | 624 |
| Ye hasten to the grave! What seek ye there . . . . .        | 663 |
| Ye who intelligent the Third Heaven move . . . . .          | 767 |
| Ye wild-eyed Muses, sing the Twins of Jove . . . . .        | 741 |
| Yes! all is past—swift time has fled away . . . . .         | 885 |
| Yes, often when the eyes are cold and dry . . . . .         | 185 |
| Yet look on me—take not thine eyes away . . . . .           | 561 |
| Your call was as a wingèd car . . . . .                     | 241 |









